SKULD

アフタヌーンKC

藤島康介

ああっ女神さまっ

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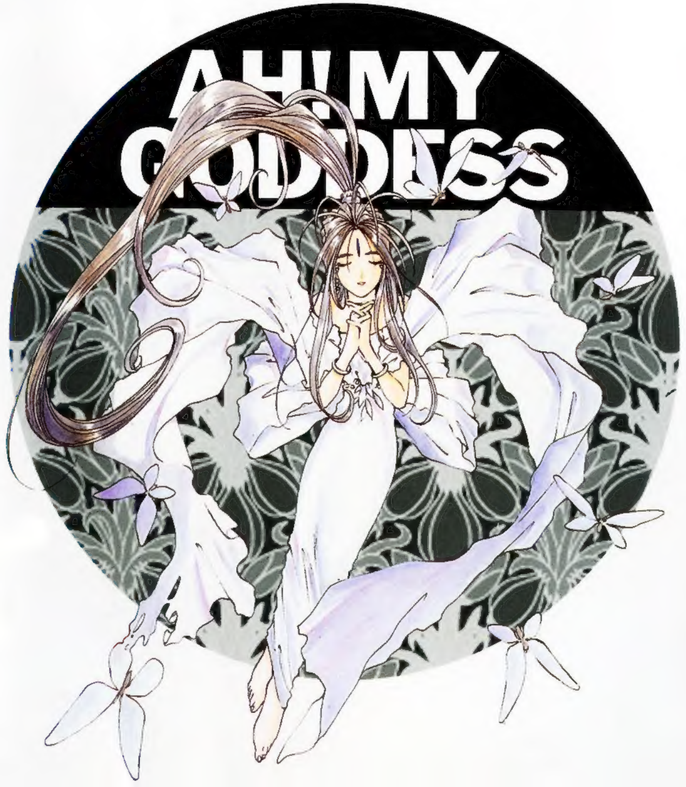

藤島康介
KOSUKE FUJISHIMA

前略

みなさん，お元気ですか？ 藤島です。前回皆さんに，自家用ヘリをお見せする……などとエラそうな事を申し上げましたが，残念ながら，ヘリは整備中なので，代わりに……と言ってはなんですが，未来マシン『リバーホースⅡ』をお見せします。このサイケなカラーリング，男心をそそるメカニカルな外観，まさに未来のマシンを彷彿させる，熱いマシンです。

どうでもいいんですけど，この男は何にのってもハングオンなんですかね。

草々

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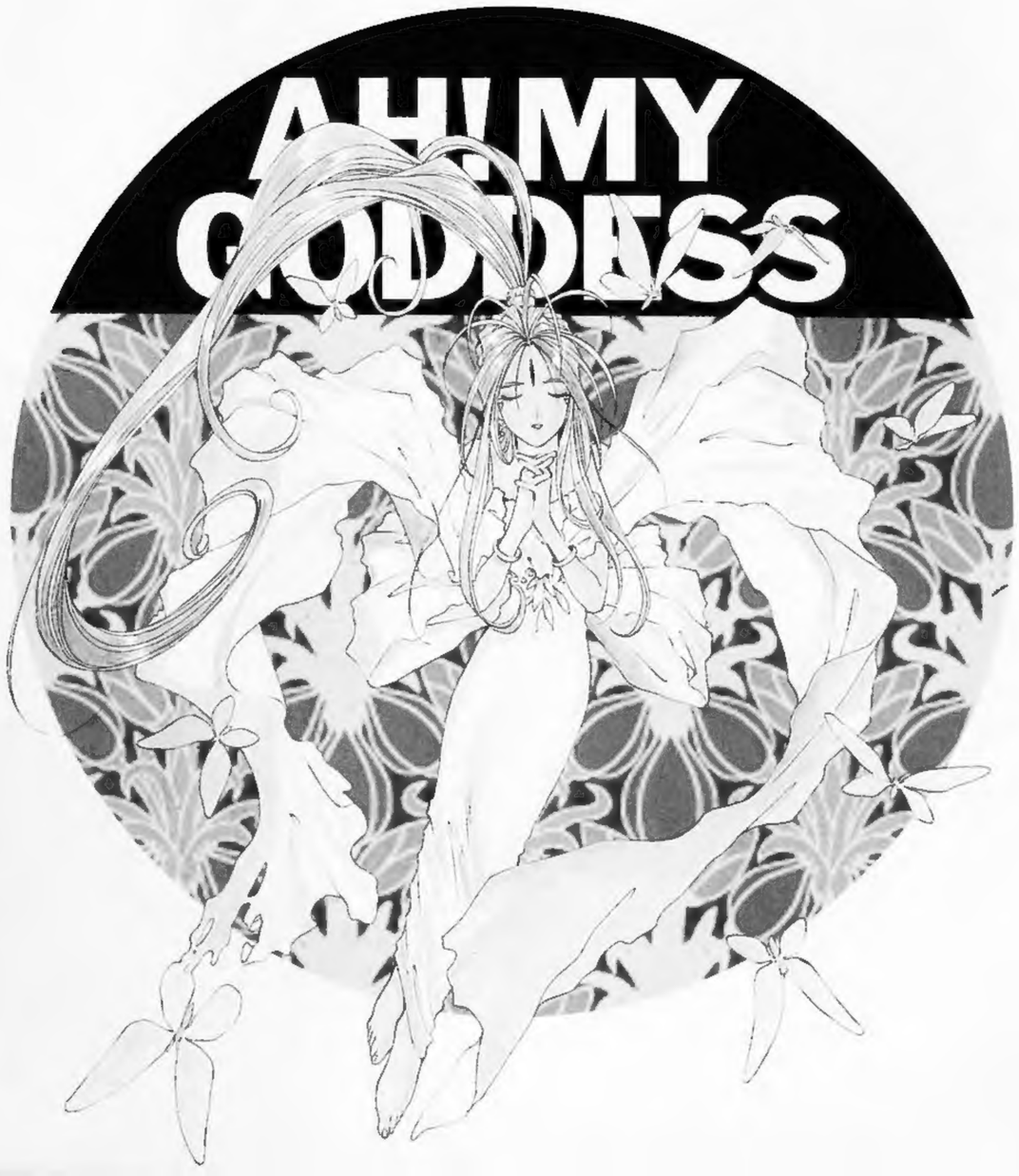

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藤島康介

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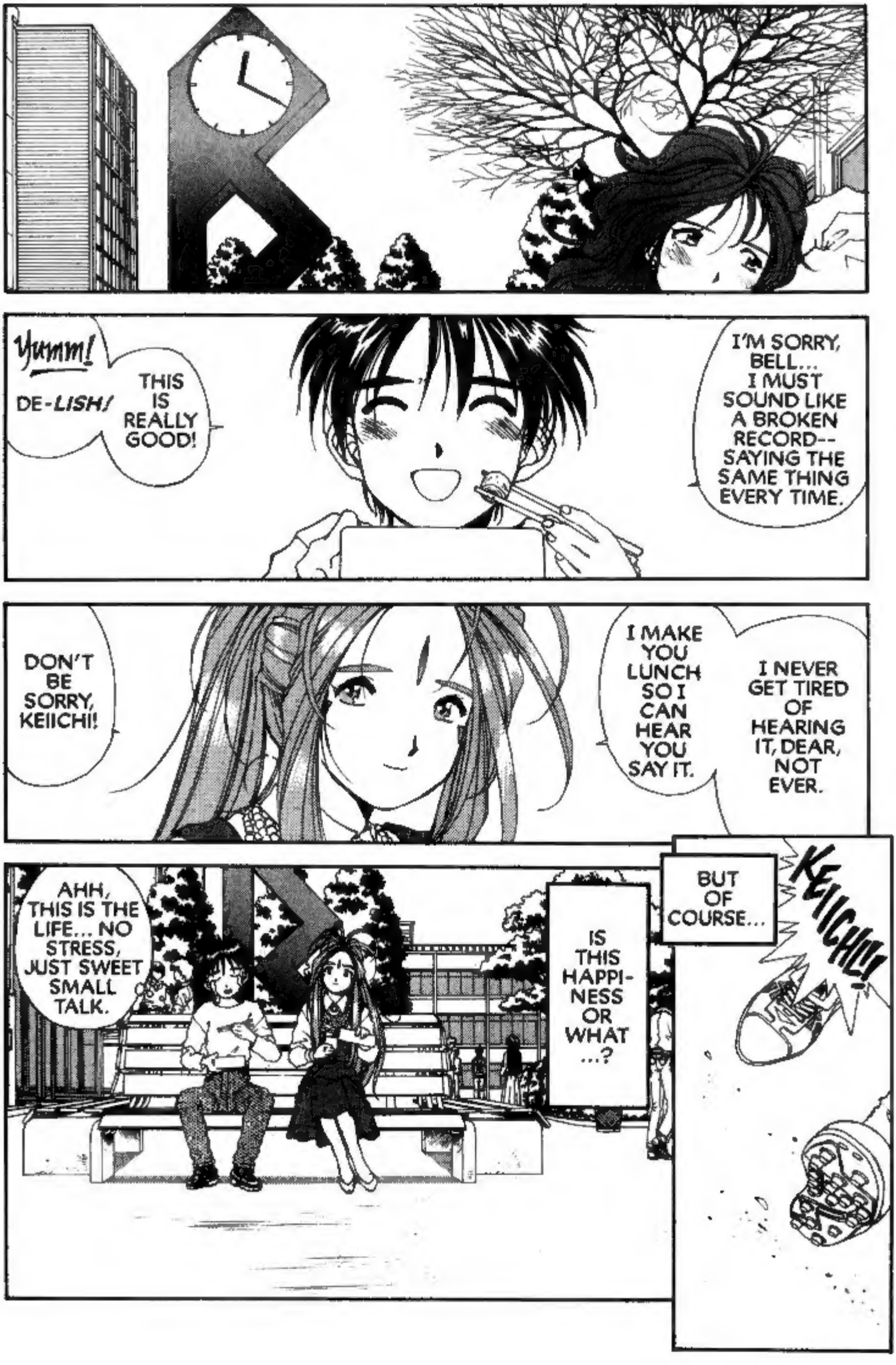
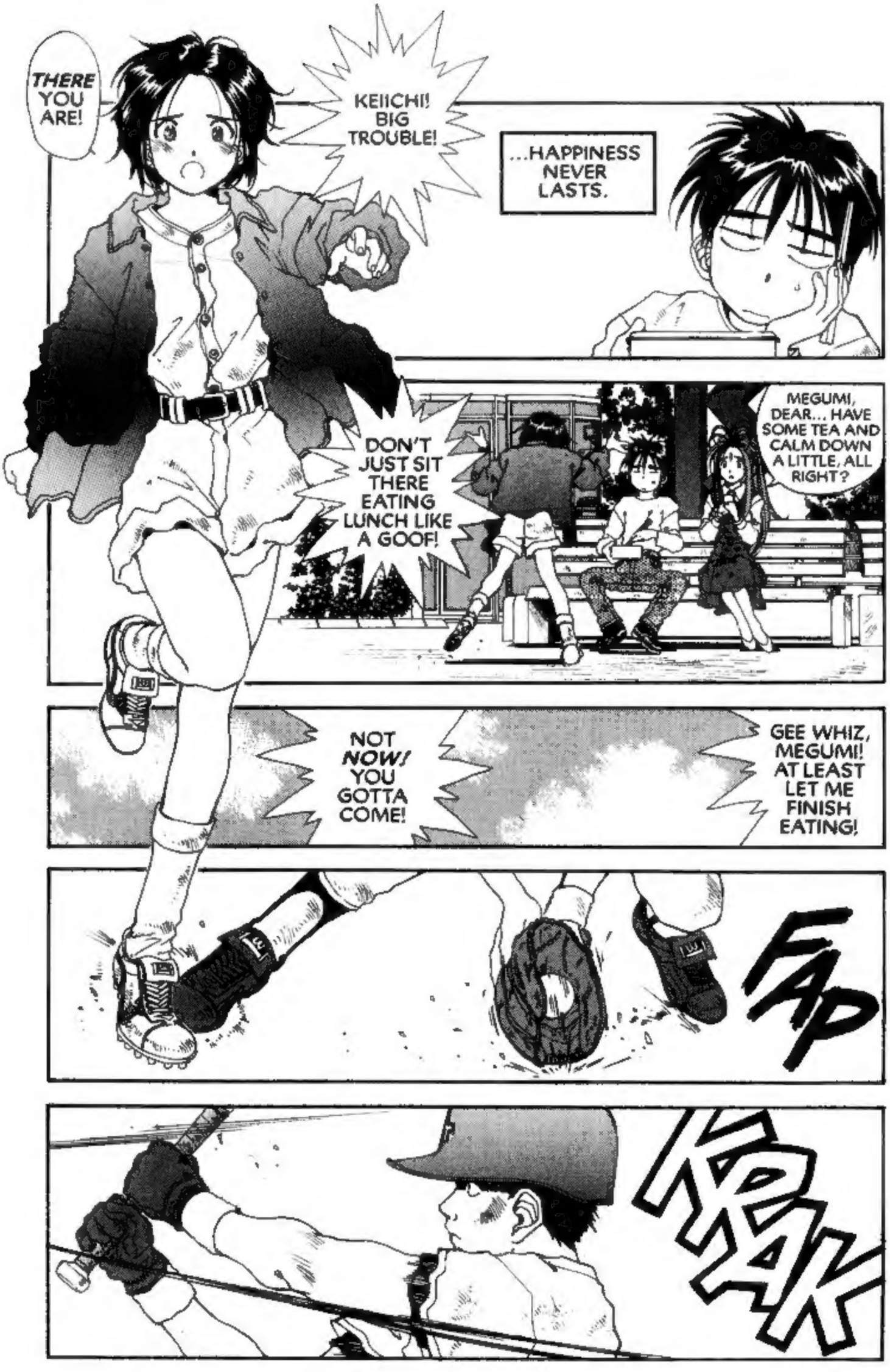
Play the Game


Yumm!
DE-LISH!
THIS IS REALLY GOOD!
I'M SORRY, BELL... I MUST SOUND LIKE A BROKEN RECORD-- SAYING THE SAME THING EVERY TIME.
DON'T BE SORRY, KEIICHI!
I MAKE YOU LUNCH SO I CAN HEAR YOU SAY IT.
I NEVER GET TIRED OF HEARING IT, DEAR, NOT EVER.
AHH, THIS IS THE LIFE... NO STRESS, JUST SWEET SMALL TALK.
IS THIS HAPPI-NESS OR WHAT ...?
BUT OF COURSE...
KEIICHI!


THERE YOU ARE!
KEIICHI! BIG TROUBLE!
...HAPPINESS NEVER LASTS.
DON'T JUST SIT THERE EATING LUNCH LIKE A GOOF!
MEGUMI, DEAR... HAVE SOME TEA AND CALM DOWN A LITTLE, ALL RIGHT?
NOT NOW! YOU GOTTA COME!
GEE WHIZ, MEGUMI! AT LEAST LET ME FINISH EATING!
FAP
KRAK

YEAH? SO? IT'S THE BASEBALL CLUB PRACTICING, RIGHT?
BUT ON MONDAY AND FRIDAY IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE *SOFTBALL CLUB PRACTICE!*
JUST BECAUSE THERE AREN'T VERY MANY OF US...
THEY KICKED US OFF THE DIAMOND! THEY'RE TRYING TO KILL OUR CLUB!
WELL, IF THAT HAPPENS, YOU CAN ALWAYS JOIN THE MOTOR CLUB...
FORGET IT!
I DON'T *WANT* TO QUIT. I... I LOVE PLAYING SOFTBALL...

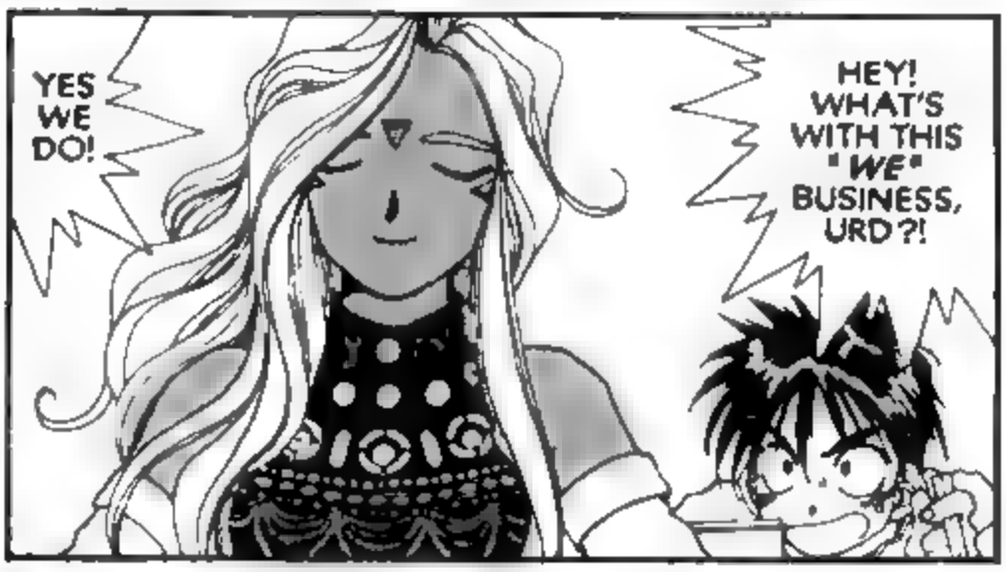
MEGUMI. ?
HEY, GIRL. AIN'T YOU GIVEN UP YET?
C'MON-- WHY DON'T YOU THROW IN THE TOWEL AND JOIN THE BASEBALL CLUB.
WE'VE GOT ALL THE PLAYERS WE NEED, BUT I COULD SURE USE A... GOFER.
NT
WHERE DO YOU GET OFF, TAKING OVER ANOTHER CLUB'S PRACTICE TIME?!
HEY, THERE'S JUST FOUR OF YOU, RIGHT?
FOUR PEOPLE DON'T MAKE A TEAM.
NUMBERS HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT!
YOU CALL YOURSELF A SPORTSMAN AND YOU CAN'T EVEN KEEP A PROMISE?!
I KNEW I COULD DEPEND ON YOU, BIG BROTHER!

PROMISE? WHAT PROMISE? NOBODY WROTE IT DOWN, DID THEY?
RATS!
MAYBE NOT...
WHETHER A RECORD REMAINS OF IT OR NOT..
.THE WEIGHT OF A PROMISE IS STILL THE SAME.
A PROMISE ISN'T AS LIGHT A MATTER AS YOU THINK!
ULP!
WHAT'S THIS FEELING? THIS TOTAL PERSUASIVE-NESS...
UH... ER... WELL, WHAT-EVER!
WE'RE STILL NOT TURNING THE GROUNDS OVER TO A TEAM THAT DOESN'T EXIST!
OF COURSE... WE COULD ALWAYS PLAY A GAME TO DECIDE...?
ALL OF US AGAINST THE FOUR OF YOU!

YOU ASKED FOR IT, PAL! WE'LL DO IT!!
WHAT A PERFECT TWIST OF FATE! IT STIRS THE BLOOD!
YOW!

OF COURSE, IF WE'RE GONNA DO IT, IT'S GOT TO BE FOR *REAL* STAKES!
LIKE... SAY.. THE WINNERS *TAKE OVER* THE LOSING TEAM!

ARE... ARE YOU *SERIOUS?* YOU DON'T HAVE THE *GUTS!*

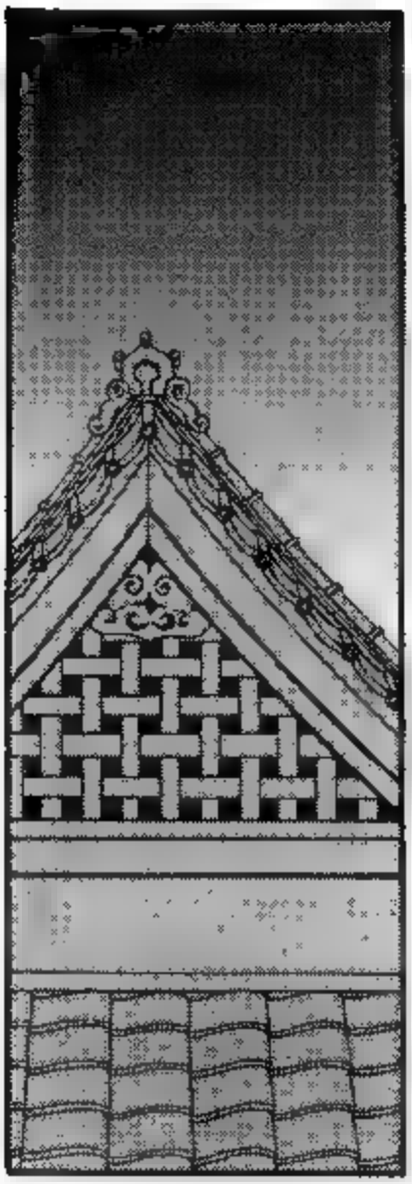

YES WE DO!
HEY! WHAT'S WITH THIS "*WE*" BUSINESS, URD?!

WHY NOT ...?!

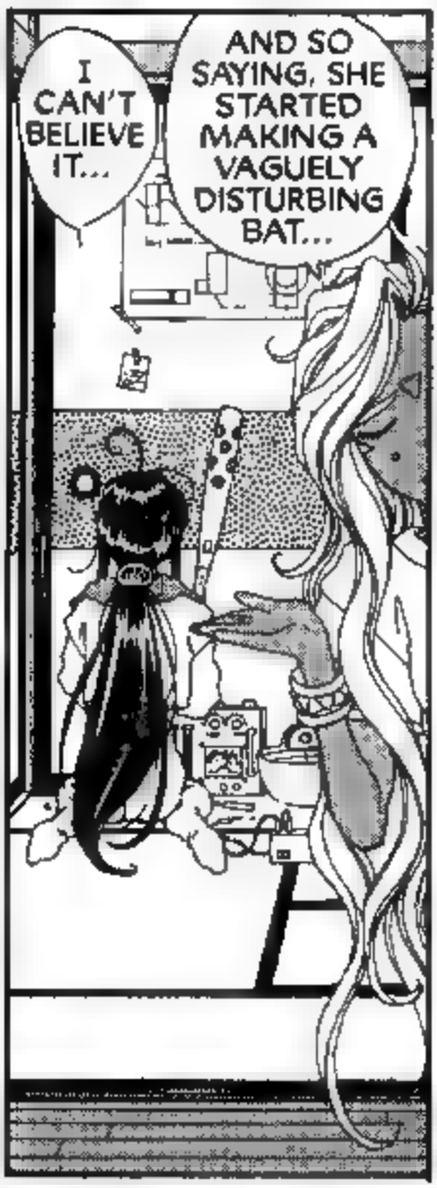
I MEAN, THE CLUB'S DOOMED, ANYWAY.
MAY AS WELL BET THE FARM ON ONE LAST GAMBLE!
BUT!
WE PLAY BY SOFTBALL RULES, OKAY?
AND WE GET TO DRAFT SOME OUTSIDE PLAYERS!
SURE, SURE, WHAT-EVER.
KEIICHI, BELLDANDY-- WILL YOU PLAY WITH US?
MAN, I KNEW IT.
HEH!
WE DID IT.
AT LAST! OUR CLUB'S AGE OLD DREAM!
WOMEN! AT LAST, WE'LL HAVE WOMEN GOFERS!

AND JUST THINK! ONE OF THEM WILL BE THE BABE SUPREME OF THE WHOLE CAMPUS, BELLDANDY HERSELF!
HERE CAPTAIN. TEA TIME.
HERE CAPTAIN YOUR TOWEL
IT'S GOOD TO BE ALIVE! THANK GOD I JOINED THE BASEBALL CLUB!

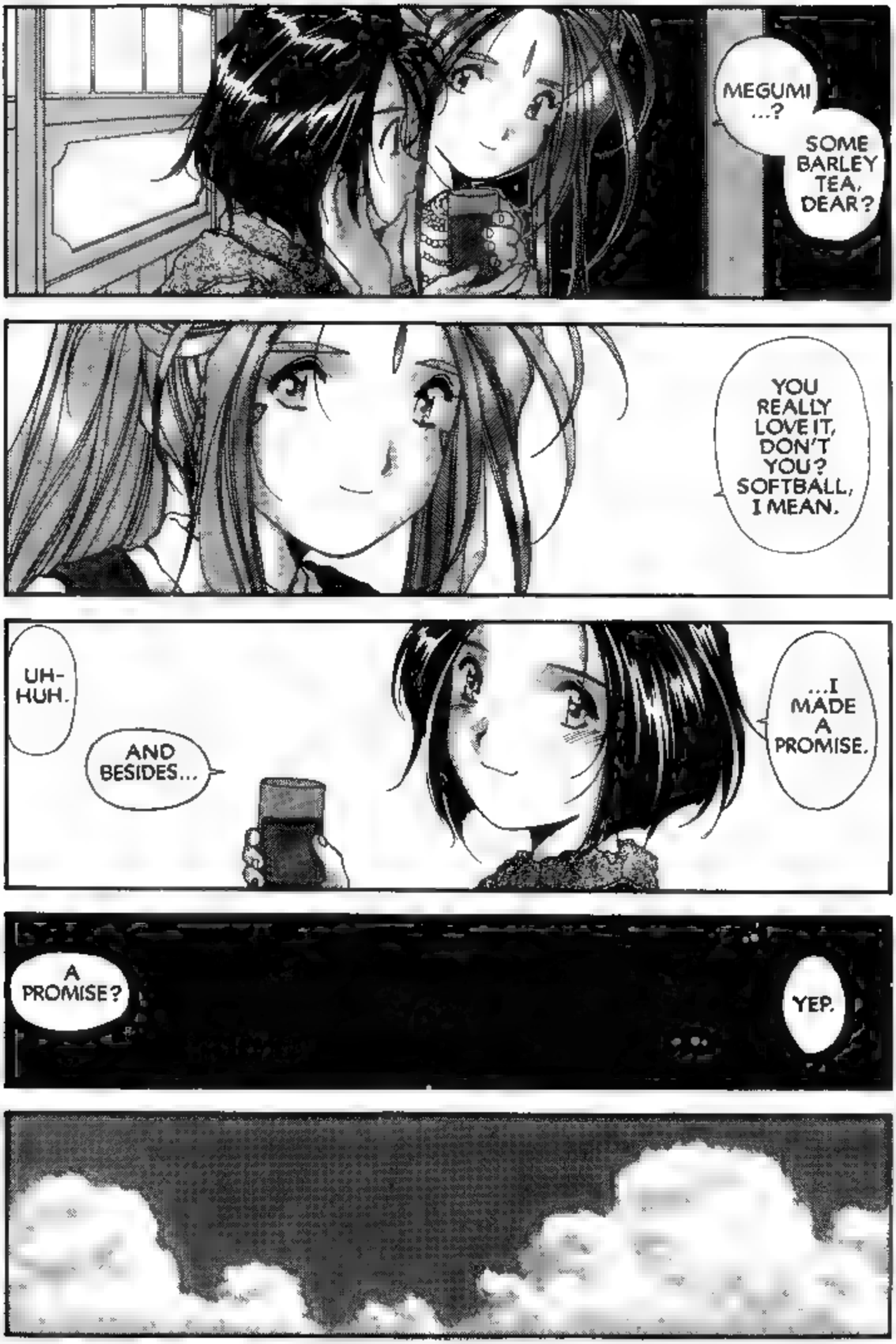
THAT'S OUR CAPTAIN... HE ALWAYS LOSES IT WHEN HE IMAGINES HAVING SOME GIRLS AROUND...
HA-LLUJAH!
YEAH... NO WONDER NO CHICKS EVER JOIN.

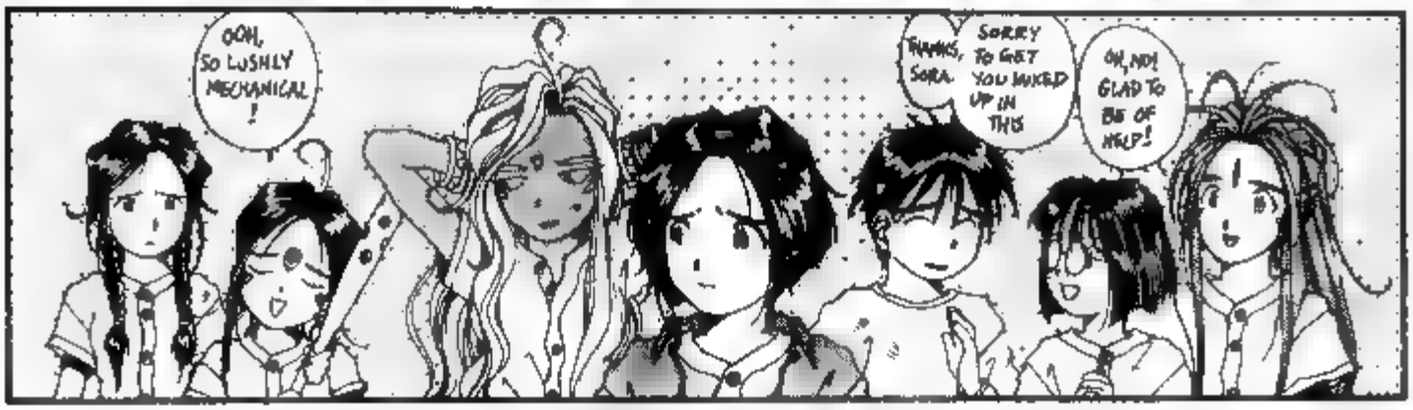


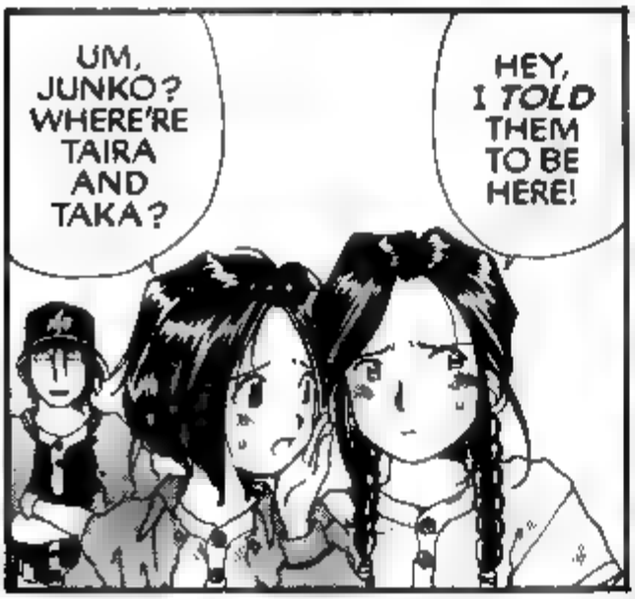
NO WAY, GUYS! WHY, WHY, WHY?!
WHY DID YOU DRAG BELLDANDY INTO THIS SILLINESS?!


I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
AND SO SAYING, SHE STARTED MAKING A VAGUELY DISTURBING BAT...

AND NOW, KEIICHI LET'S GET STARTED.
STARTED? WHATCHA MEAN?
THAT'S RIGHT! BEFORE AN IMPORTANT GAME LIKE THIS, YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE SPECIAL TRAINING!
IT'S THE WAY THINGS ARE DONE!
YOU'VE BEEN WATCHING OLD SPORTS ANIME AGAIN, HAVEN'T YOU?
TRAINING! SPECIAL TRAINING!
"SPECIAL TRAINING" ..?
URD'S MYRIAD LIGHT-SPEED GROUNDERS!!
KRAK
KRAK
KRAK
STOP! STOP! IT'S TOO DARK TO SEE THE BALL!
WHINER!! NOW WE JUST SET THE BALLS ON FIRE!
NEXT! URD'S IRONBALL BATTING PRACTICE!
...
...


MEGUMI ...?
SOME BARLEY TEA, DEAR?
YOU REALLY LOVE IT, DON'T YOU? SOFTBALL, I MEAN.
UH-HUH.
AND BESIDES...
...I MADE A PROMISE.
A PROMISE?
YEP.


OOH, SO LUSHLY MECHANICAL!
THANKS, SORA.
SORRY TO GET YOU MIXED UP IN THIS
OH, NO! GLAD TO BE OF HELP!


UM, JUNKO? WHERE'RE TAIRA AND TAKA?
HEY, I *TOLD* THEM TO BE HERE!

WHAT'S THE DEAL? YOU'RE SHORT TWO PLAYERS... YOU GONNA FORFEIT?
YOU *WISH!* THEY'RE JUST *LATE*, OKAY?!

NOW WHAT? I NEVER DREAMED THEY WOULDN'T SHOW, SO I DIDN'T ASK ANYONE ELSE...

BWA HAW HAW!
YOU IN TROUBLE, MA'AM?!

HERE COME ..
..THE DYNAMITE BASEBALL BROTHERS, TO SAVE THE DAY!
...
TAMIYA AND OTAKI ...?
HOW THE DEVIL DID THEY FIND OUT?
SO PLAY BALL ALREADY
WE'RE.. WE'RE SORRY, MEGUMI...
BUT THOSE GUYS ARE SO... SCARY!
WELL, SO BE IT. AT LEAST YOU TWO LOOK TOUGH.
CALL US DA DYNAMITE BASEBALL BROTHERS!
OKAY, OKAY!

BELLDANDY! KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL!
...
??
OK!
LESSEE... FOR MY FIRST PITCH, A STRAIGHT BALL HIGH ON THE INSIDE.
I'LL FORCE HER TO DUCK, AND SCARE THE WILLIES OUT OF HER!
HEY... ARE YOU SURE? BEANBALL HER, AND THE BELLDANDY FAN CLUB'LL LYNCH YOUR ASS, BUDDY!

TRUST ME! I'LL PUT THIS SUCKER ONE INCH PAST HER NOSE!
OH, BABY... COME RUNNING TO FIRST!
MAKE IT TO SECOND AND I'LL GIVE YOU A HUG!
RATS! IF I'D KNOWN, I WOULD HAVE TRIED OUT FOR FIRST!
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE PITCHED A SOFTBALL, BUT ..
MUMBLE MUMBLE
HEH... YOU THOUGHT IT'D BE EVEN IF WE PLAYED SOFTBALL RULES, HUH? WELL...
YOU MAY NOT KNOW IT...
BUT WHEN I WAS A KID THEY CALLED ME THE "SOFTBALL WIZARD"...!
AND SWEETHEART, MY SOFTBALL PITCH BREAKS EIGHTY-FIVE MILES PER HOUR!
WHSSH

GEH!
SHE DIDN'T EVEN *BLINK!*
HEY!! WATCH WHAT YOU'RE DOING, YOU *SCUMBAG!*
YEAH! YOU BETTER NOT HURT MY SISTER!
KEIICHI! I KEPT MY EYE ON THE BALL!
SO, MAKE FUN OF ME, HUH? THINK YOU'RE *TOUGH*, HUH?
IN THAT CASE...

BALL ONE!
BALL TWO!
TRY *THIS* ONE!!
BALL THREE!
BALL FOUR! BATTER WALKS!
ACK... BLEW IT!
HEY!
YOU'RE IN *BIG* TROUBLE, PAL!
YOU TRIED TO HIT MY SISTER WITH THE BALL!
YOU'RE GONNA *PAY* FOR THAT!

SHEESH-- SHE'S JUST A KID! WHERE'D THEY COME UP WITH HER?
BUT HEY..
I DON'T GIVE NO ONE A BREAK!
SKULD'S AUTOMATED TARGET TRACKING BAT...!
KLIK
...THE TOMAHAWK NUMBER ONE!
SWITCH ON!
SPEEN
SPLAT

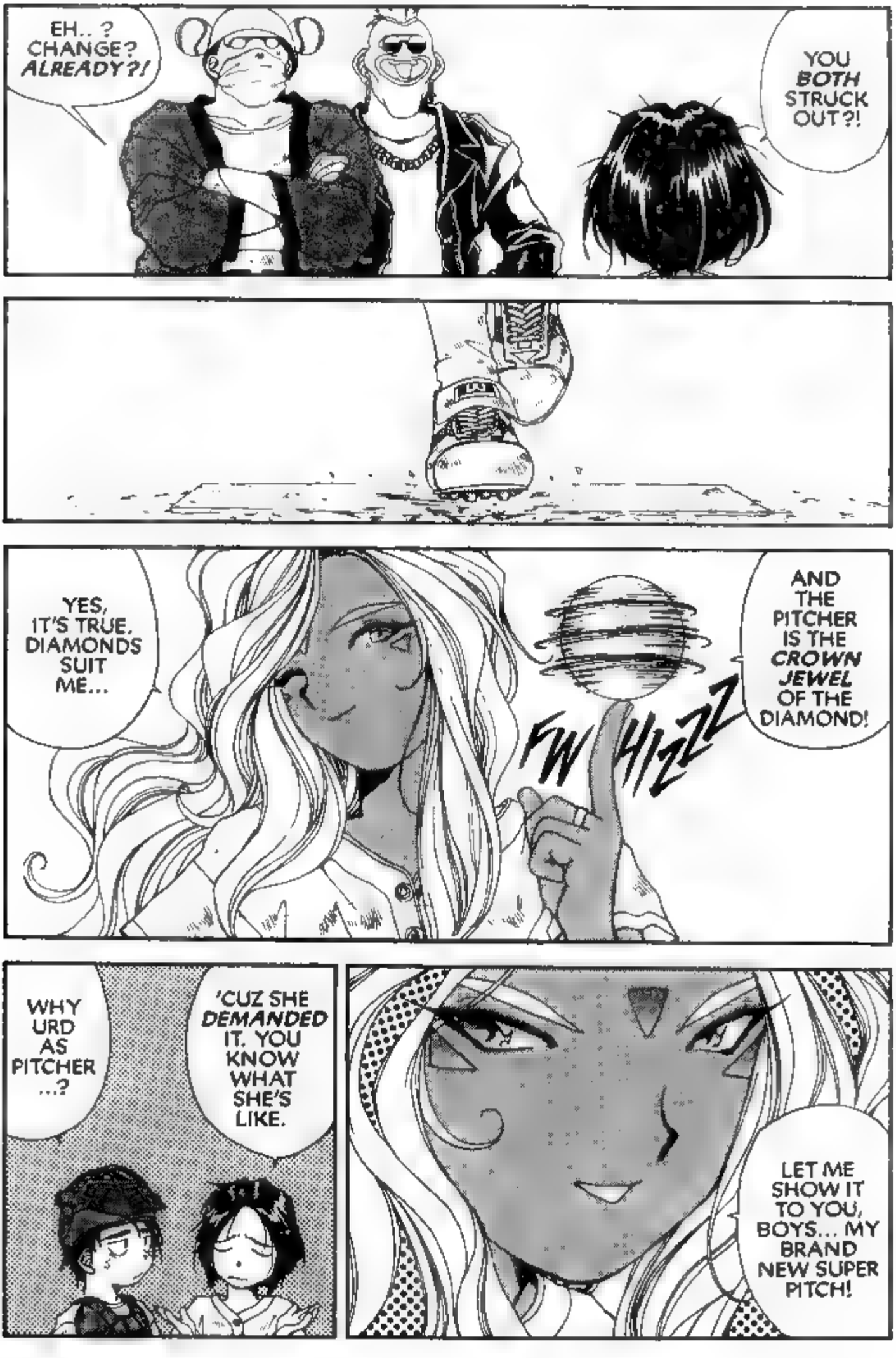
KRAK

SNIFF

GO, BELDANDY, GO!

WAY TO PUNCH IT, SKULD!
NO DIDN'T HAPPEN. NOT THAT LITTLE KID...

YOU JUST CALLED ME A KID, DIDN'T YOU?!
YEAH... YEAH, I DID.
SO WHAT'S IT TO YA?
FWAK
I AM NOT A KID!!
FAP
I HEARD YOU! YOU SAID I'M A LITTLE KID!
OUT!!
SOMEDAY YOU GET A NEO SKULD BOMB, PAL!
THANKS FOR YOUR HELP, "YOUNG LADY"
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING, SKULD?! SHEESH!
OH, MAN...
WHAT AM I GETTING ALL UPSET FOR...?
WE'VE JUST STARTED, RIGHT?
AND BESIDES, IT'S ONE OUT, RUNNER ON THIRD... NOT BAD.

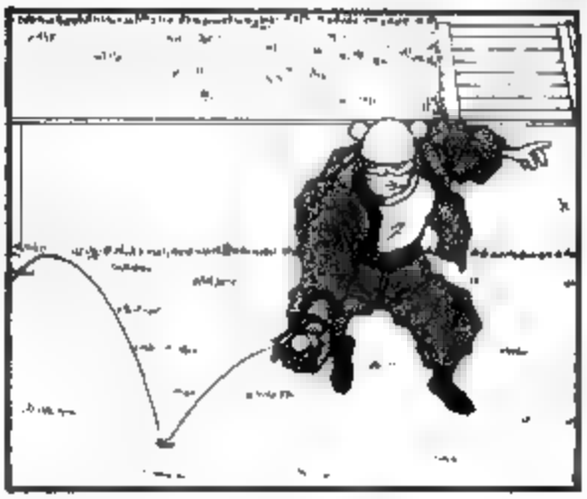

EH.. ? CHANGE? ALREADY?!
YOU BOTH STRUCK OUT?!
YES, IT'S TRUE. DIAMONDS SUIT ME...
FW HIZZZ
AND THE PITCHER IS THE CROWN JEWEL OF THE DIAMOND!
WHY URD AS PITCHER ...?
'CUZ SHE DEMANDED IT. YOU KNOW WHAT SHE'S LIKE.
LET ME SHOW IT TO YOU, BOYS... MY BRAND NEW SUPER PITCH!

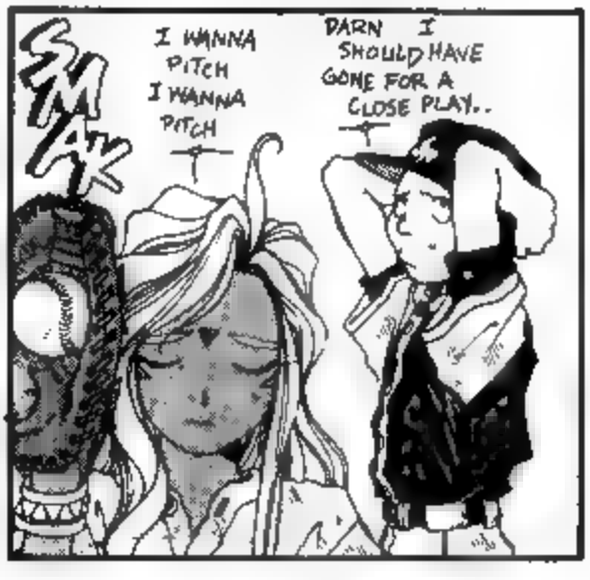
I DUB THEE.. THE URD THUNDER-BOLT PITCH!!
OH, NO!
I... I DIDN'T EVEN SEE THE BALL!
MY GOD! HOW CAN ANYBODY THROW SO FAST?!
FWOOSH

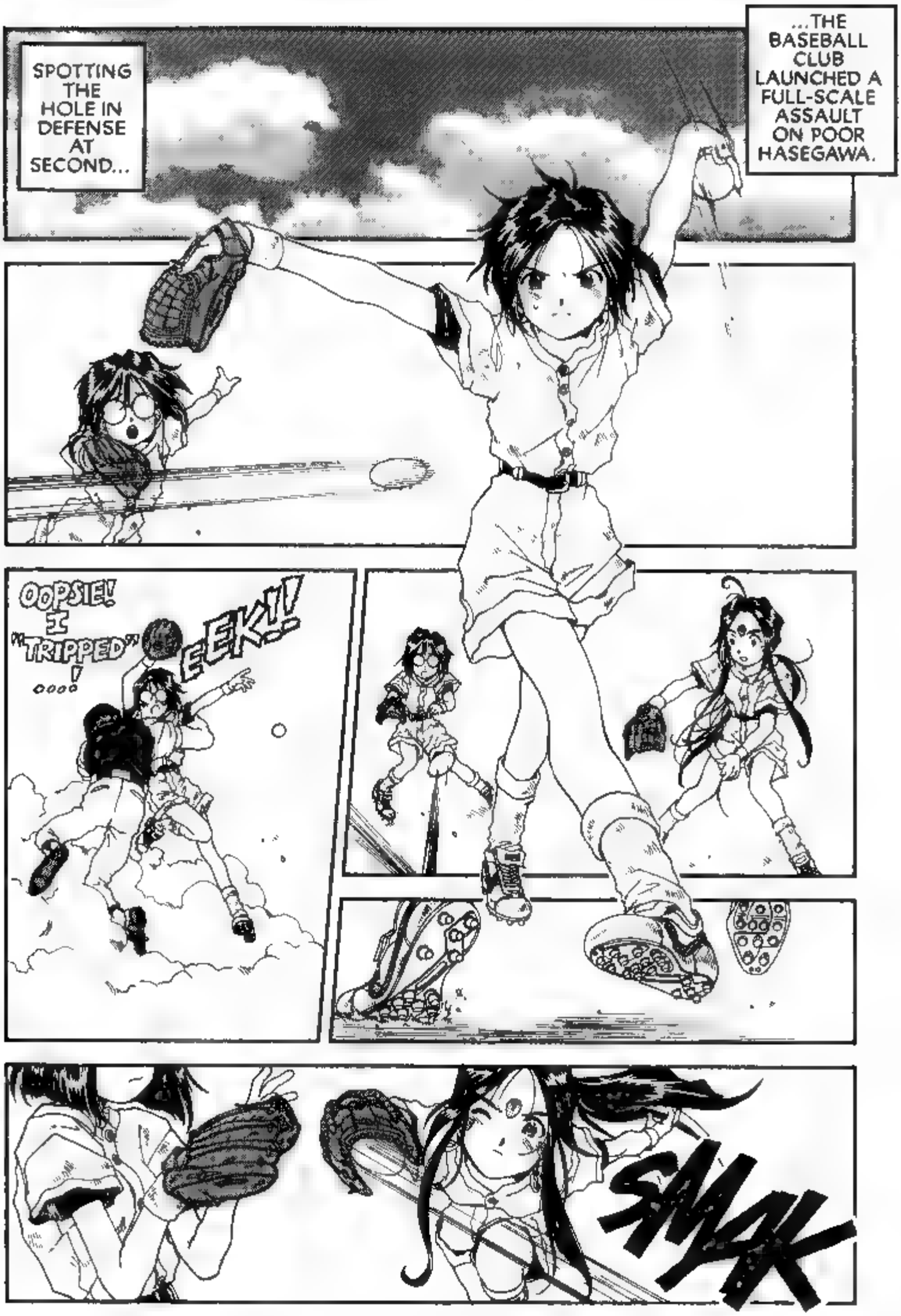
THE UNEXPECTED GREAT WEAKNESS OF THE URD THUNDER-BOLT PITCH WAS THAT. . THE BALL NEVER LEFT HER FINGERS.
OOPS!
SORRY, SORRY!
!!
ILLEGAL PITCH!!
I SHOULD NEVER HAVE LET HER PITCH...
PHOOEY!
FWIPP
WHIII

HEY, YOU GOT MOXIE, GIRL. GOOD PITCH!
BUT YA KNOW
THAT'S ONLY IF WE WERE TALKIN' SOFTBALL!
KRAK
SECOND!!

!!
KRAK




SMACK
I WANNA PITCH I WANNA PITCH
DARN I SHOULD HAVE GONE FOR A CLOSE PLAY..

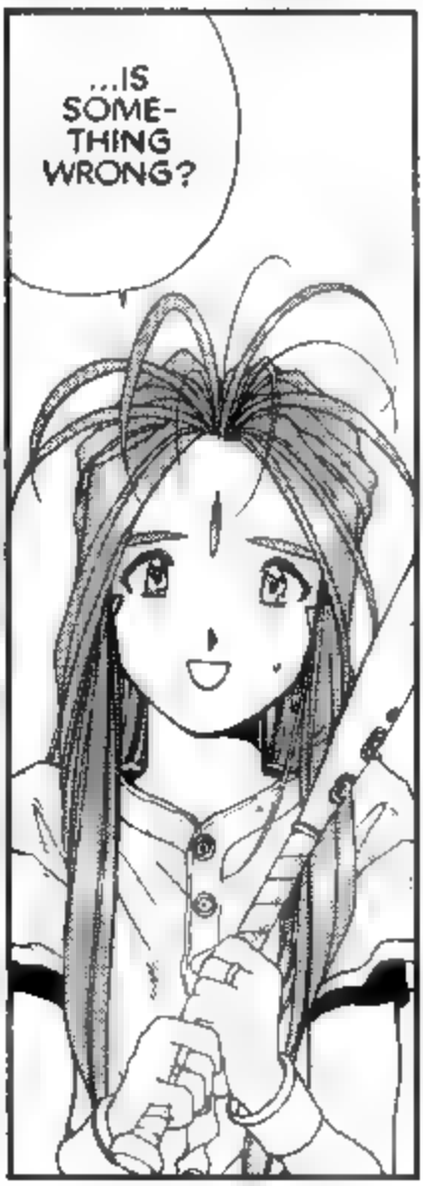

SPOTTING THE HOLE IN DEFENSE AT SECOND...
...THE BASEBALL CLUB LAUNCHED A FULL-SCALE ASSAULT ON POOR HASEGAWA.
OOPSIE! I "TRIPPED" ! oooo
EEK!!
SMACK

SMAK
TRIPLE PLAY! CHANGE!
HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN TO STAY LIKE THAT. .?
FOREVER AN' EVER!!
GET YOUR PAWS OFF ME!
FZZZAK
YAIEE!
THANKS FOR... COVERING ME... SKULD.
HEH HEH... PRETTY COOL, HUH?! AN AUTO-TRACKING GLOVE!
IT PICKS THEM RIGHT OFF!
WOW! YOU'RE SO COOL, SKULD!
HEH HEH... THANKS.
SOFT 0 1 0
BASE 4 8 5
HANG IN THERE, SORA!
≥Sighhh
I GUESS IT WAS HOPELESS, AFTER ALL.
UM...
..EXCUSE ME?

I'M SORRY
I'M DRAGGING DOWN THE WHOLE TEAM

I ASKED YOU TO PLAY.
AW, THAT'S OKAY.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, SORA

AH...?
SAY...


...IS SOME-THING WRONG?

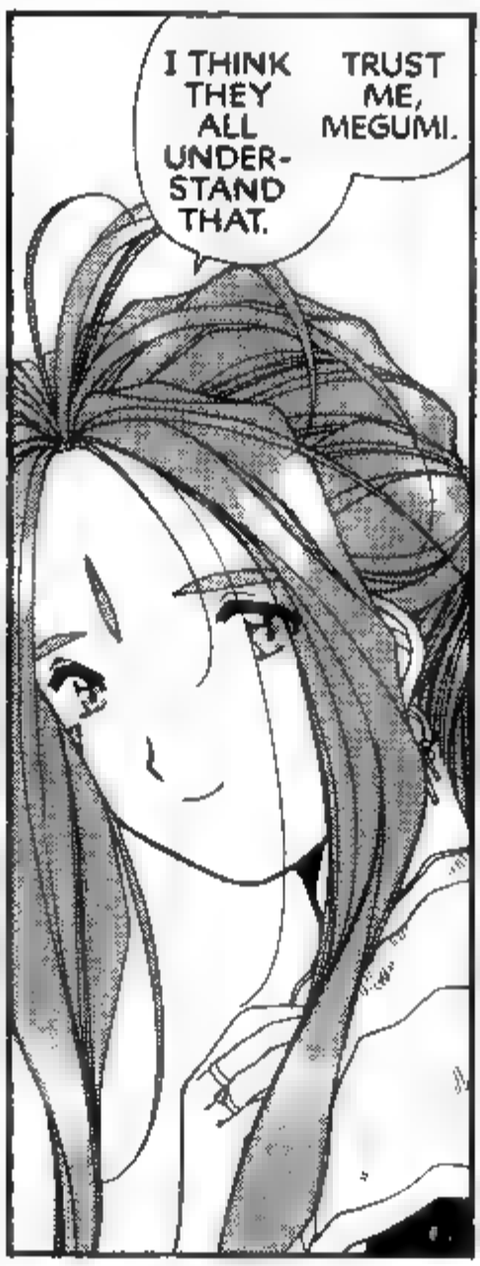
COME ON, EVERY-BODY!
LET'S SEE A HAPPY SMILE!
"HAPPY SMILE" ...?
→GULP!←
BETTER DO WHAT SHE SAYS, GUYS SHE'S GOT A BAT
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING!
HA HA!
WH... WHAT GOT INTO YOU, GIRL?!
WA HA HA HA!
WELL... I JUST THOUGHT..
YOU ALL LOOKED SO UNHAPPY.

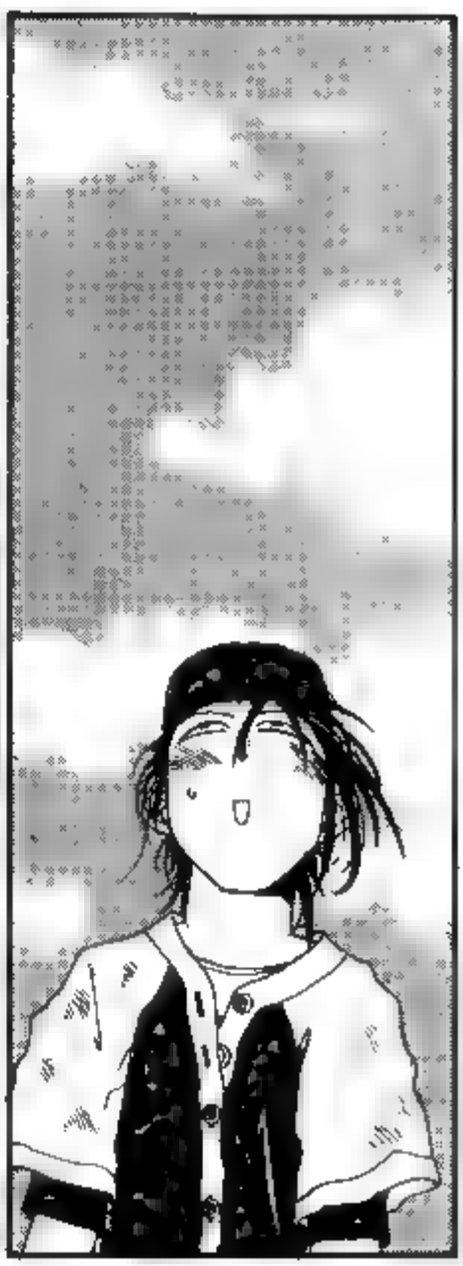
OF COURSE IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT..
TO BE SERIOUS ABOUT WHAT YOU DO.
BUT IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FUN DOING THEM, THEN SOMEDAY EVEN YOUR FAVORITE THINGS WILL BECOME A BURDEN.
I THINK THE VERY BEST PLAYERS...
...ALWAYS FIND JOY IN THE GAME, EVEN IN THEIR DARKEST HOUR.
I MEAN, OF COURSE, IT *IS* A COMPE-TITION...
...SO YOU SHOULD AT LEAST *TRY* TO WIN, BUT...

SHE'S RIGHT! WE CAN'T JUST GIVE UP!
AH, WELL THEN... GUESS WE BETTER GET BACK TO THE GAME.

UM...
BELL-DANDY ...?!
HEY, AT LEAST I'M TRYING!
YES, DEAR?

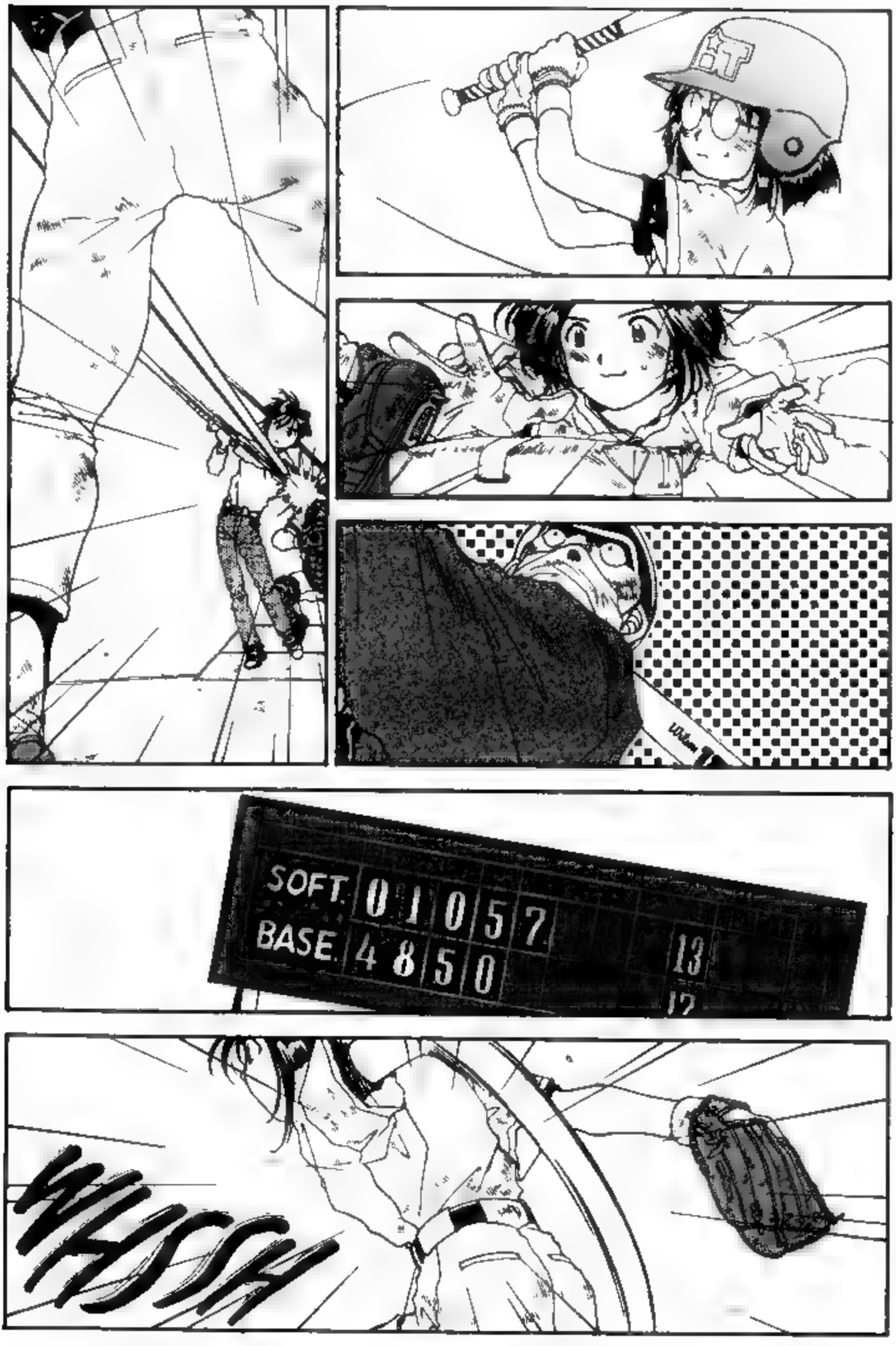
I'M SORRY I'M TAKING THIS TOO SERIOUSLY, BUT... IT'S JUST... I DON'T WANT TO SEE THE SOFTBALL CLUB DISAPPEAR. I REALLY DON'T.


I THINK THEY ALL UNDER-STAND THAT.
TRUST ME, MEGUMI.



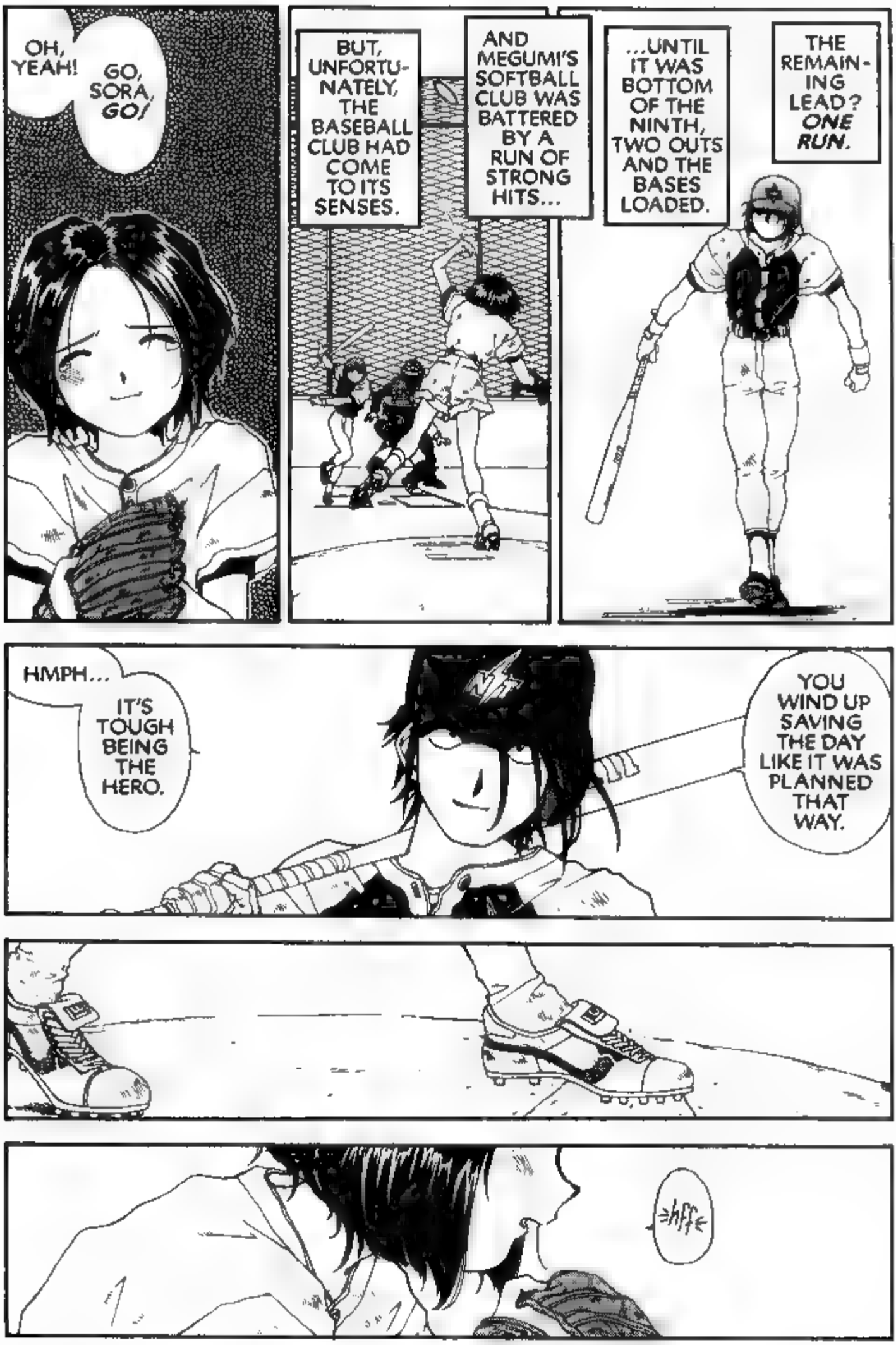
HERE, CAPTAIN! A NICE WARM TOWEL!
YOU WORK SO HARD!
A BABE GOFER...
REAL SOON, YEAH...
OOH, EXCUSE ME, BOYS...!
...BUT I BORROWED THIS UNIFORM, AND IT'S OH SO TIGHT UP FRONT!
I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND... HMM?
EH! NO! UH, NOT AT ALL!
N-N-N-N-NO BRA?!

AT THAT INSTANT...
OOH, LET ME MASSAGE YOUR BACK!
DEAR CAPTAIN!
TWO GOFERS YEAH, WHY NOT?!
THEN YOU CAN MASSAGE ME, CAPTAIN!
REASSURED BY THEIR TREMENDOUS LEAD...
...AND BEFUDDLED BY URD'S WICKED WILES.
...THEY WERE REDUCED TO A BUNCH OF BLITHERING IDIOTS.


SOFT 0 1 0 5 7
BASE 4 8 5 0
13
12
WHOSH

STEEE--
RIKE!
HUH?!
YAHOO!
TWO
RUNS!!
GACK!
WE'RE...
BEHIND?!
SOFT
BASE
NO!
WAIT!
COME
BAAACK!
FAREWELL,
CAPTAIN!
BYE-BYE,
CAPTAIN!
KAWADA!
SNAP
OUT OF
IT!
IF YOU
DON'T,
MY...
ER, OUR
GIRLS ARE
[redacted]
FOREVER!
HUH?

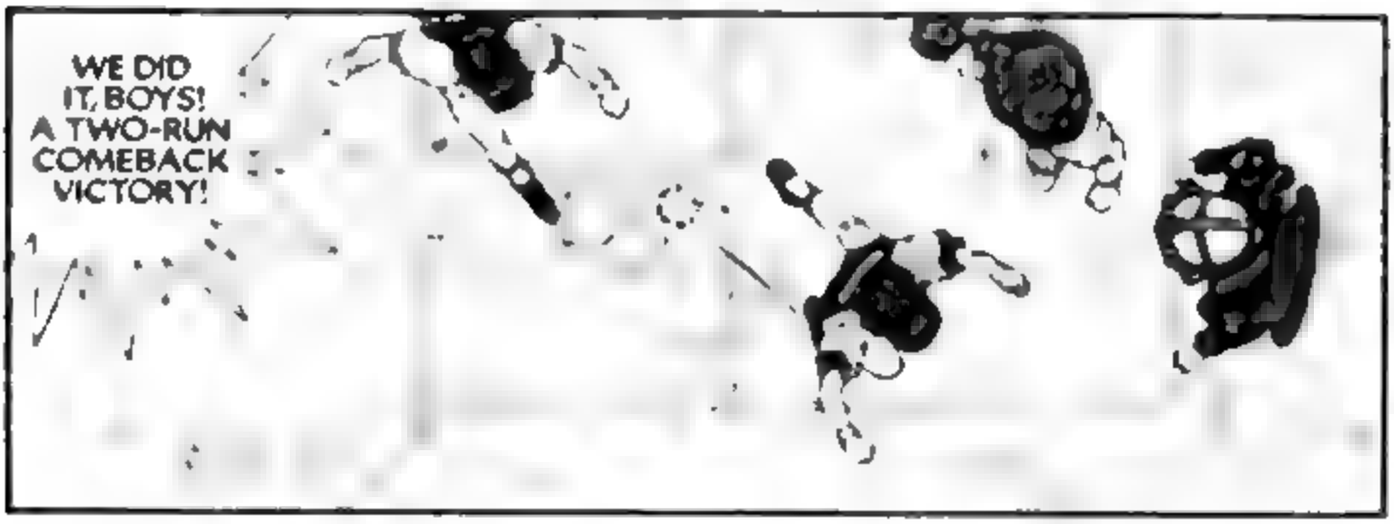
!!
OH NO!
RIGHT BETWEEN FIRST AND SECOND!
SKULD CAN'T COVER HER!
SORA?!
HEH...
SO MAYBE I'M GOOD FOR SOMETHING, AFTER ALL...?


OH, YEAH!
GO, SORA, GO!
BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, THE BASEBALL CLUB HAD COME TO ITS SENSES.
AND MEGUMI'S SOFTBALL CLUB WAS BATTERED BY A RUN OF STRONG HITS...
...UNTIL IT WAS BOTTOM OF THE NINTH, TWO OUTS AND THE BASES LOADED.
THE REMAINING LEAD? ONE RUN.
HMPH...
IT'S TOUGH BEING THE HERO.
YOU WIND UP SAVING THE DAY LIKE IT WAS PLANNED THAT WAY.
=hff=

Sniff
Sob
I'M.. I'M SORRY, K-KEIICHI.
I.. I LOST THE GAME FOR YOU..
AW, IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT, MEGUMI.
OF COURSE, IT'S NO FUN LOSING...
BUT.
IT'S STILL LOTS OF FUN TO PLAY, ISNT IT?
I THINK YOU LIKE SOFT-BALL, HMM?
Sniff
YEAH.
YOU'RE STILL LITTLE, MEGUMI.
JUST ONE YEAR KEIICHI!
SO... YOU MEAN... I CAN BE BETTER WHEN I'M BIGGER...?
SURE, YOU CAN!

GOOD ENOUGH TO BEAT YOU, KEIICHI?
WELL I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT!
THEN THEN I'LL NEVER QUIT SOFTBALL' EVER!
NOT UNTIL I CAN BEAT MY BIG BROTHER!

I'LL NEVER QUIT
GO MAN GO!!


WE DID IT, BOYS! A TWO-RUN COMEBACK VICTORY!

I'M I'M SORRY, M-MEGUMI .
I .. I LOST THE GAME FOR YOU...
AW, IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT, SORA. OF COURSE, IT'S NO FUN LOSING. .
BUT... IT'S STILL LOTS OF FUN TO PLAY, ISN'T IT?
AND NOW! A DEAL'S A DEAL!
THANK YOU, GOD! THE BABES ARE MINE!
'SCUSE ME-- TOUCH OUT.
YOU WERE THE FIRST ONE ACROSS HOME, RIGHT?
OUT!!
GAME OVER!
WHAT?! YOU FORGOT TO TOUCH THE PLATE?!
I'M . I'M SORRY, C-CAPTAIN I I LOST THE GAME FOR YOU...
DAMN RIGHT YOU DID, YOU STUPID IDIOT!
YOU REALLY WANT TO TAKE THEM OVER?
I'LL PASS.

Sorrow, Fear Not

..AND IN THE FOREHEAD OF THE DOLPHIN ARE FOUND HIGHLY SPECIALIZED ORGANS FOR--
...!
IT . IT'S SO CUTE!!
KEIICHI! WE GOTTA GET ONE!
DOWN IN FRONT, KIDDO!
NO WAY.
HERE, DARLING... I JUST MADE THESE COOKIES.
THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO WAY WE ARE KEEPING A PET IN THIS HOUSE.
HELLO? ANYBODY HOME..?!
COME IN!

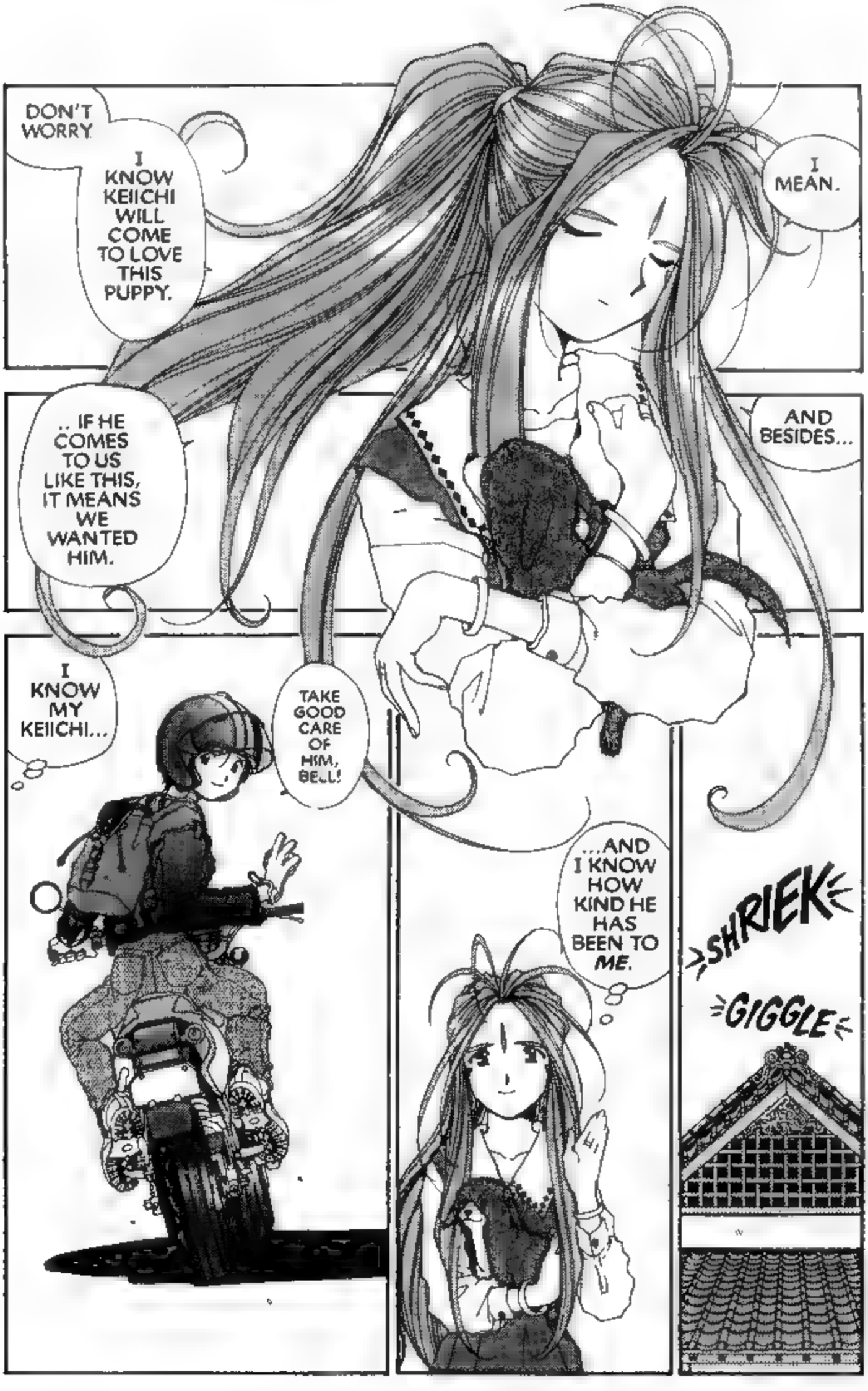
HOWDY, BIG BROTHER!
THANKS FOR HELPING OUT THE OTHER DAY.
THANKS TO YOU, THE WORD'S GOTTEN AROUND THAT THE SOFTBALL CLUB'S COOLER THAN THE BASEBALL CLUB, AND NOW WE'VE GOT A WAITING LIST TO JOIN!
HOW NICE
HERE, BELL
THANK YOU, MEGUMI!
LIKE, DON'T JUMP FOR JOY OR ANYTHING CRAZY LIKE THAT...
EXCUSE ME? DO I LOOK LIKE I AM?
AND WHY NOT, YOU MIGHT ASK? WELL, DEAR SISTER... IT SEEMS WHENEVER YOU DROP BY, YOU BRING A DOUBLE DOSE OF TROUBLE WITH YOU.
eh neh
BINGO...

PLEASE ...?
I'M BEGGING YOU, KEIICHI!
I GAVE HIM SOME FOOD YESTERDAY AND HE FOLLOWED ME HOME.
AND THEY WON'T LET US KEEP PETS IN MY APARTMENT COMPLEX, REMEMBER?
IF YOU KNEW YOU COULDN'T KEEP HIM...
...YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE FED HIM.
CHOMP

...
BAD PUPPY! DON'T!
CHOMP
OOH, I THINK HE LIKES YOU!
YOU CALL THIS BEING LIKED?
EEEEEK!
HE'S SO CUTE!
EEK!
EEK!
EEK!
HERE... COME HERE, BOY!
MMM!
DIDN'T KNOW SHE HAD IT IN HER...

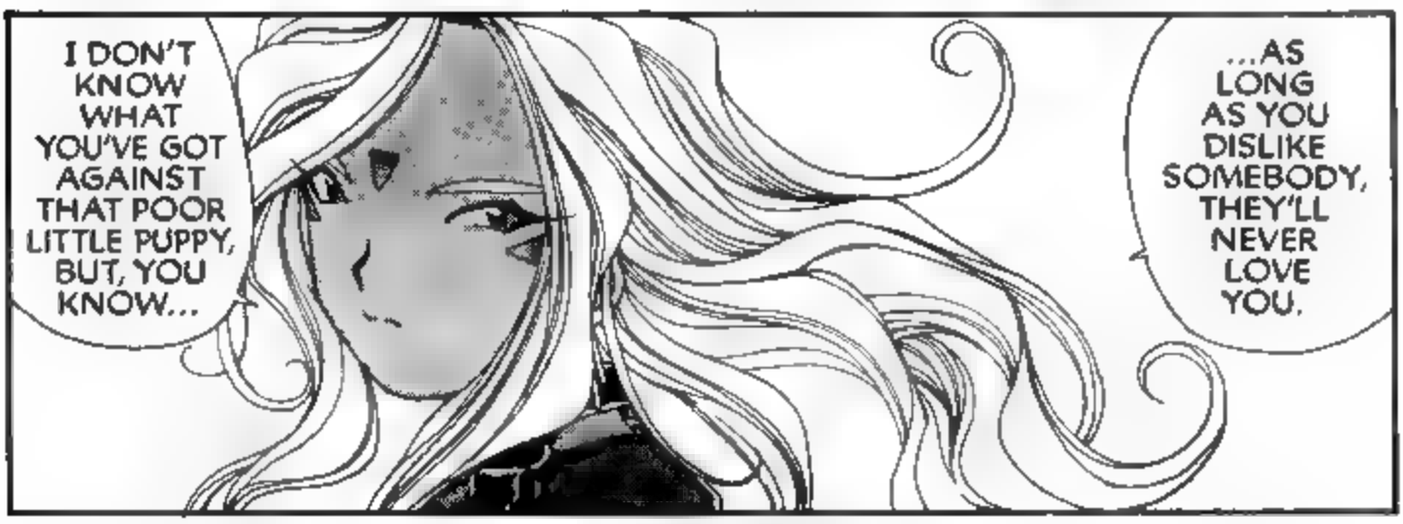
KEIICHI! KEIICHI! HE'S GONNA STAY WITH US FOREVER AN' EVER, RIGHT?!
WRONG. NO KEEP.
OOOH!
WHAT?! NO WAY!! WHY NOT?!
I WAN' HIM, I WAN' HIM!
GEEZ... JUST LIKE A KID...
I HATE YOU I HATE YOU!
YOU BIG STUPID DUMMY!!
GOT THE SHIRT, TOO... SHE'S DEFINITELY GETTING MORE POWERFUL
HATE YOU DUMMY
STUPID HATE YOU

KEIICHI...? YOU ABSOLUTELY REFUSE TO KEEP HIM...?
EVEN IF YOU ASK ME TO.
THIS ONE'S A NO!
LOOK... YOU CAN KEEP HIM HERE UNTIL YOU FIND SOMEONE TO TAKE HIM IN.
ONE WEEK-- NO MORE!
....
....
!
WHAT NOW?
I ALREADY ASKED EVERYONE ELSE I KNOW.


DON'T WORRY.
I KNOW KEIICHI WILL COME TO LOVE THIS PUPPY.
I MEAN.
.. IF HE COMES TO US LIKE THIS, IT MEANS WE WANTED HIM.
AND BESIDES...
I KNOW MY KEIICHI...
TAKE GOOD CARE OF HIM, BELL!
...AND I KNOW HOW KIND HE HAS BEEN TO ME.
SHRIEK
GIGGLE

HA HA HA! OVER HERE, PENICILLIN!
URD! THAT'S SUCH A STUPID NAME!!
DON'T YOU LISTEN TO A WORD THAT SILLY OLD LADY SAYS!
OKAY, PLIERS?
P-P-PLIERS?! YOU CALL THAT A NAME?!
IT'S A GREAT NAME!
I WASH MY HANDS OF THIS, GIRLS.
IT'S NOT MY FAULT IF YOU GET SO ATTACHED TO HIM THAT... THAT IT HURTS TO SAY GOOD-BYE.

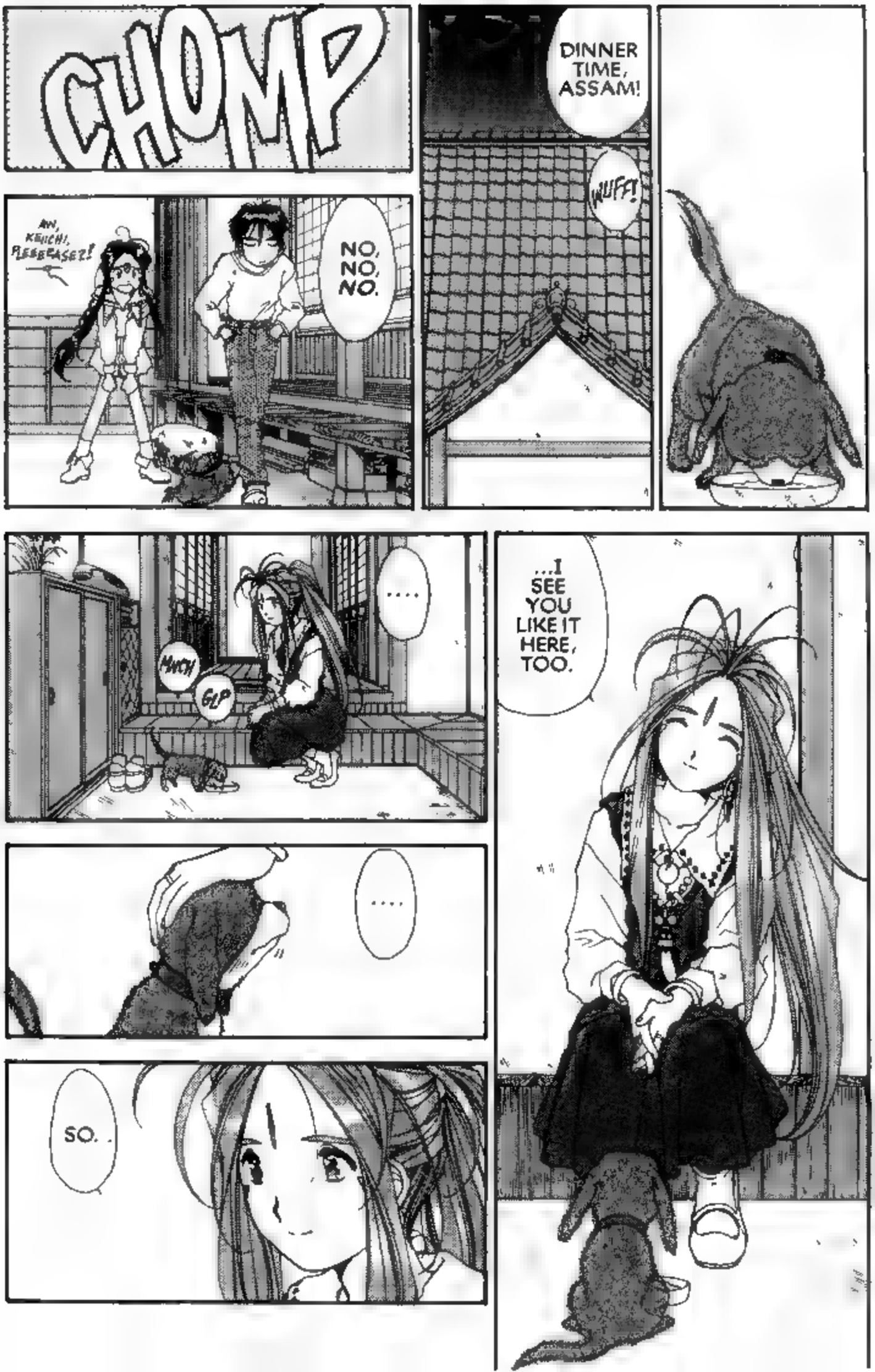
YOU GOT A GRIM LOOK ON YOUR FACE, SONNY.
WHAT'S YOUR PROB? YOU HATE DOGS OR SOME-THING?
. . .


I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE GOT AGAINST THAT POOR LITTLE PUPPY, BUT, YOU KNOW...
...AS LONG AS YOU DISLIKE SOMEBODY, THEY'LL NEVER LOVE YOU.

WHEN DID I EVER SAY I WANT HIM TO... TO LOVE ME?

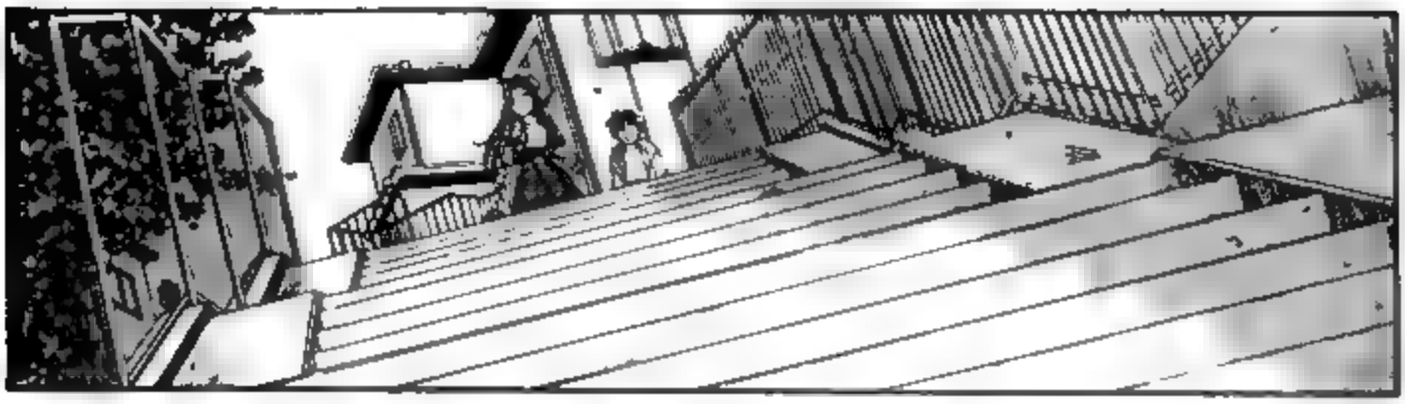
=haahh=
=haahh=

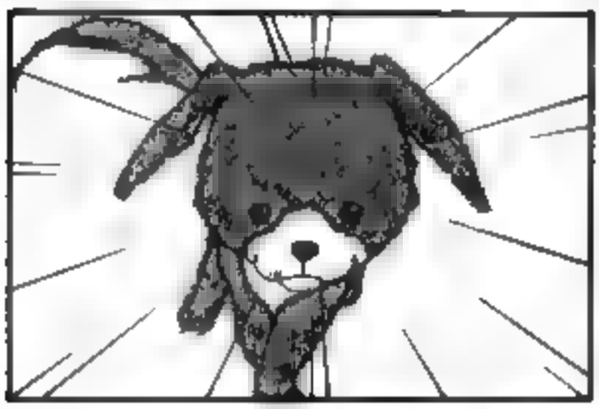
IT'S SO HARD...


CHOMP
DINNER TIME, ASSAM!
HUFF!
AH, KEIICHI, PLEEEEASE?!
NO, NO, NO.
....
MUCH
GLP
...I SEE YOU LIKE IT HERE, TOO.
....
SO...

KEIICHI ?
KEIICHI ?
MU?
I'M SORRY DEAR IT'S EARLY I KNOW
MG
NAW F GET IT
GACK! SIX A.M.!
KEIICHI
WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE A WALK WITH ME?
HUH ?
UM SURE
WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO HER ALL OF A SUDDEN?

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN...
COME ON!



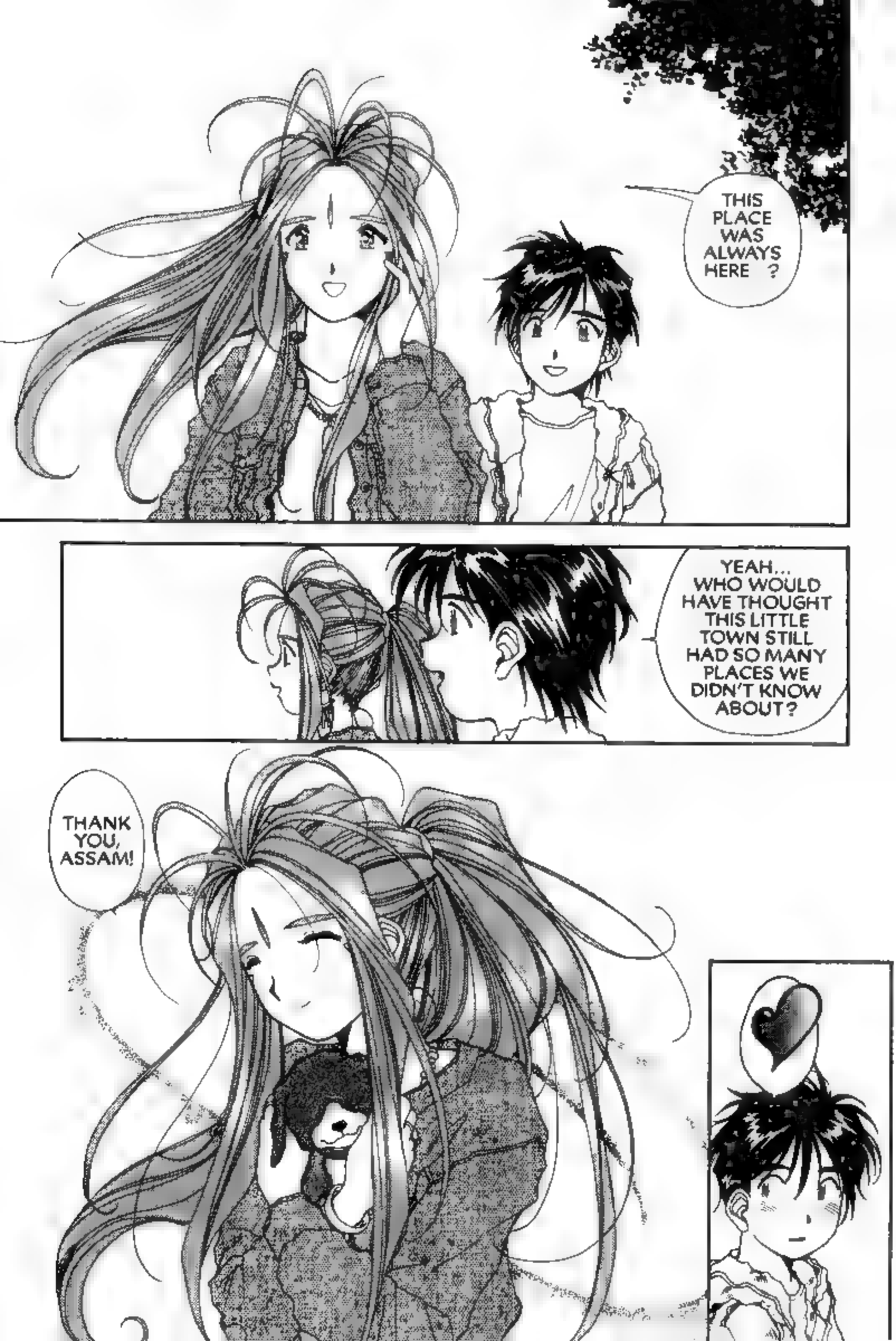


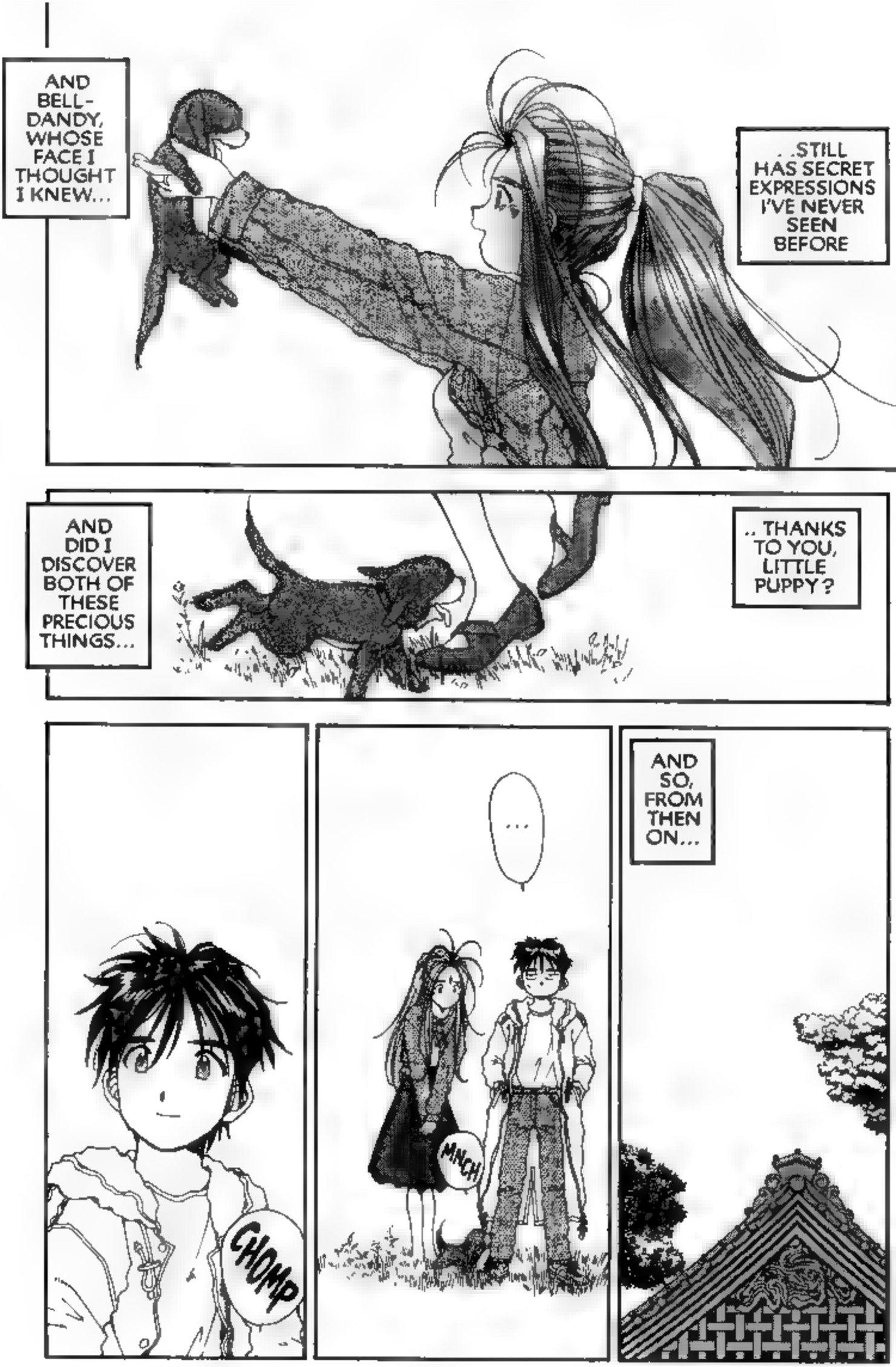
HMM ...?

W-WAIT! WE NEED TO GO--
ASSAM ...?!

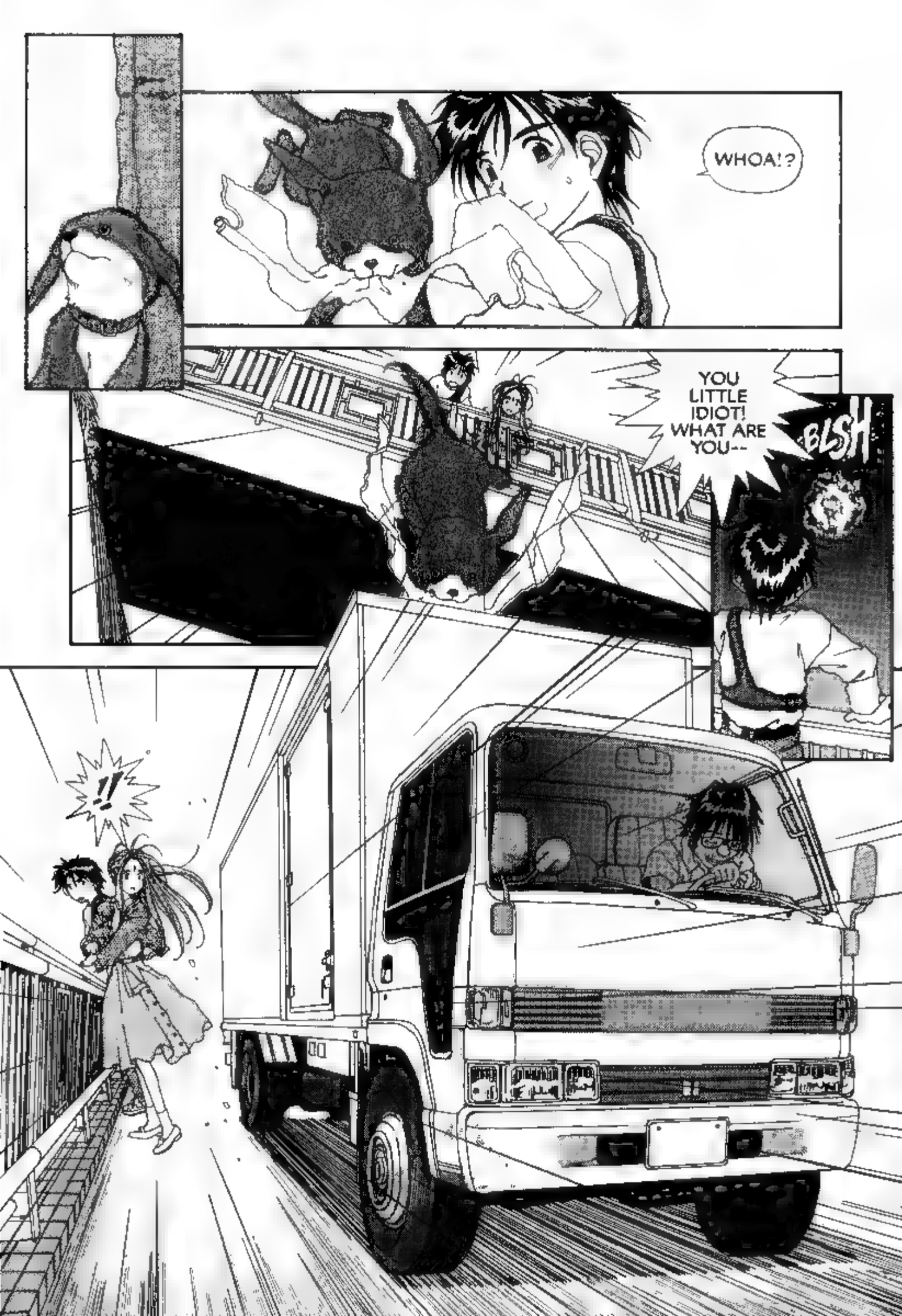
LET'S FOLLOW HIM, BELL-DANDY.
BUT...

SOMETIMES DOGS KNOW JUST WHERE WE SHOULD GO
HA HA HA


THIS PLACE WAS ALWAYS HERE ?
YEAH... WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THIS LITTLE TOWN STILL HAD SO MANY PLACES WE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT?
THANK YOU, ASSAM!


AND BELL-DANDY, WHOSE FACE I THOUGHT I KNEW...
...STILL HAS SECRET EXPRESSIONS I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE
AND DID I DISCOVER BOTH OF THESE PRECIOUS THINGS...
.. THANKS TO YOU, LITTLE PUPPY?
CHOMP
...
MNCH
AND SO, FROM THEN ON...

KEIICHI ...?
YOU LIKE ASSAM DON'T YOU?
MM.
BUT. .
...WE'RE STILL NOT KEEPING HIM
BUT, KEIICHI--
...
AT IT AGAIN, ARE YOU?
CHOMP

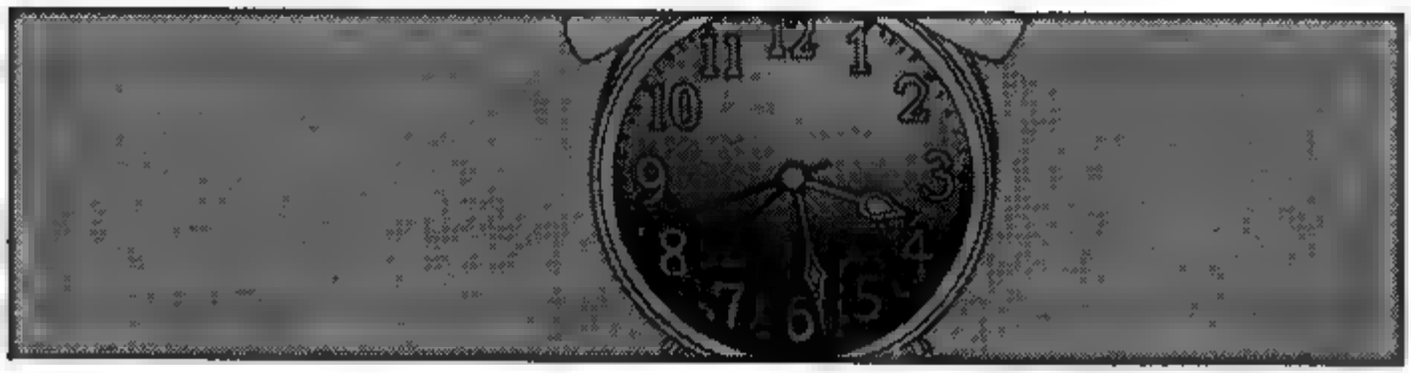

WHOA!?
YOU LITTLE IDIOT! WHAT ARE YOU--
BLSH
!!

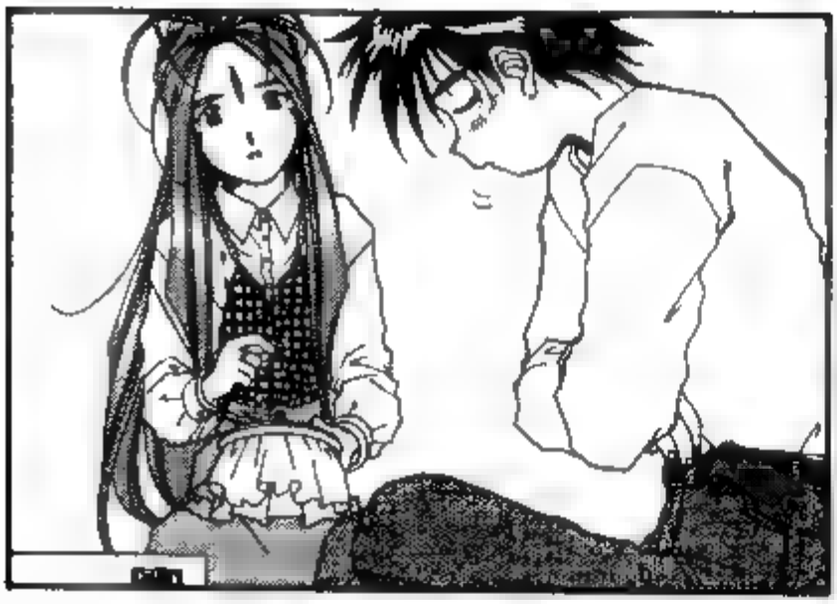
YOU WANTED TO WARN US?
HE HASN'T COME UP!!
ASSAM!!

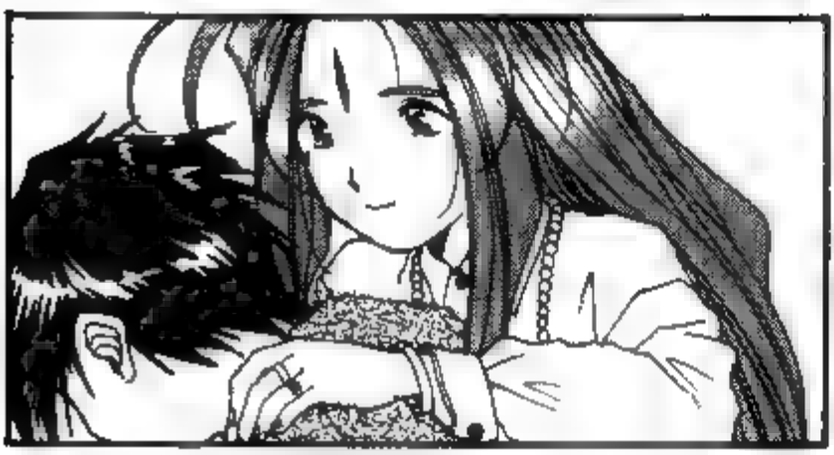
YOU STUPID DOG! WHY!?
WHY DO THAT FOR ME?!
KOTA!!
OH, NO!!

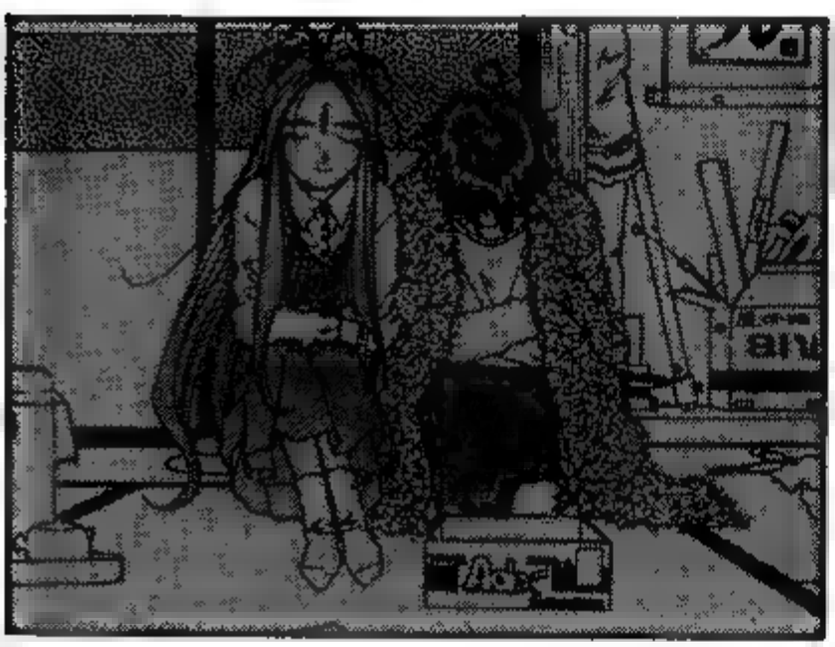
HOW?! WHAT HAPPENED?!
THIS IS ALL *YOUR* FAULT, KEIICHI!! I JUST *KNOW* IT!!
SKULD! IT... IT'S NOT KEIICHI'S FAULT.
AND DON'T WORRY...
...ASSAM WILL BE ALL RIGHT.
HE GOT A LITTLE WATER INTO HIS LUNGS, SO HE'S FEELING KIND OF WEAK NOW.
BUT I'M SURE HE'LL RECOVER IF WE GIVE HIM SOME PEACE AND QUIET.

KEIICHI?
REALLY, DON'T WORRY... HE'LL BE BETTER SOON.
I'LL STAY WITH HIM, NOW. PLEASE... GET SOME SLEEP.
SHE'S RIGHT. I MEAN, LIKE... YOU HATE THE LITTLE GUY ANYWAY.
I DON'T HATE HIM!
I NEVER DID!
THEN WHY WON'T YOU LET US KEEP HIM?
...

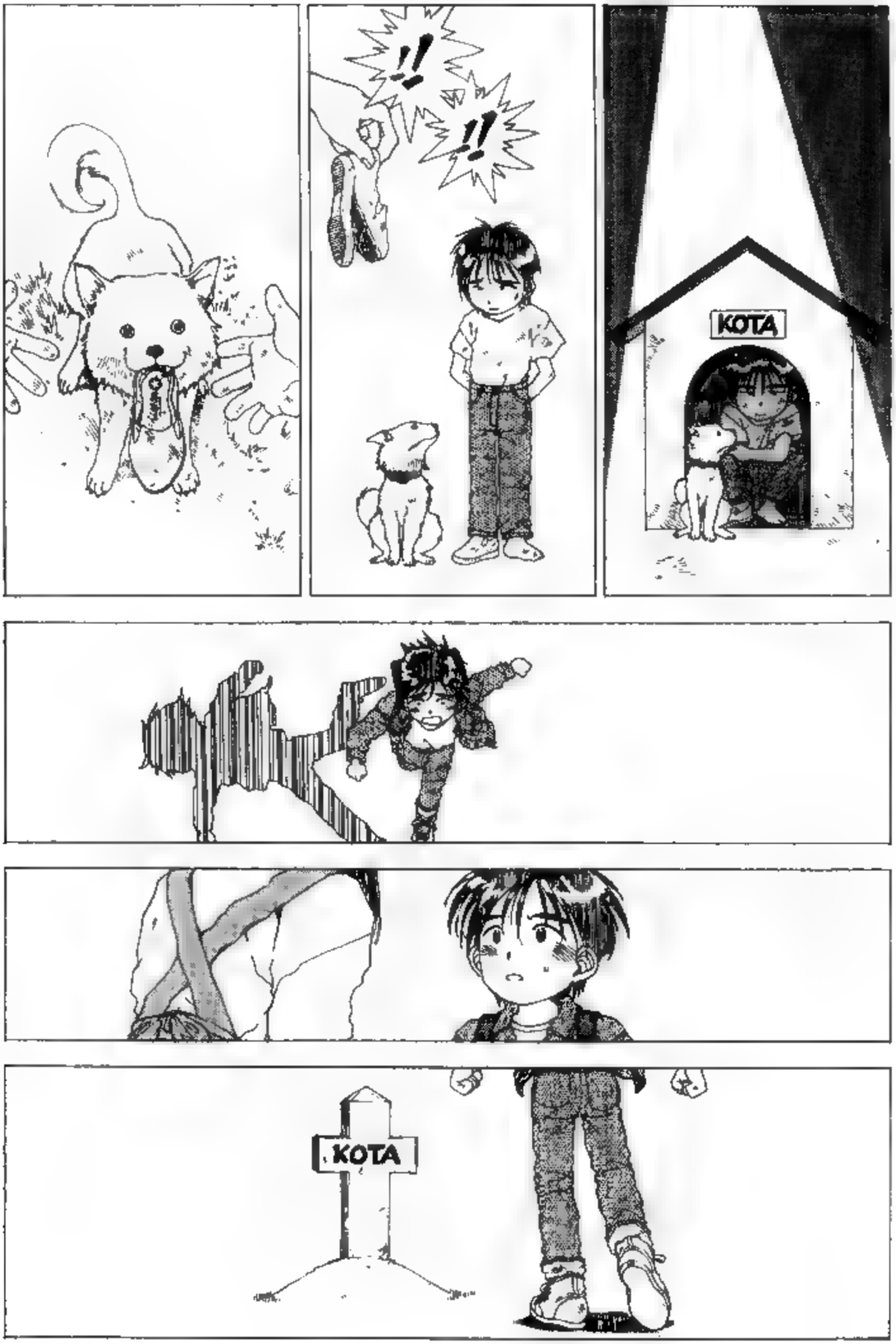




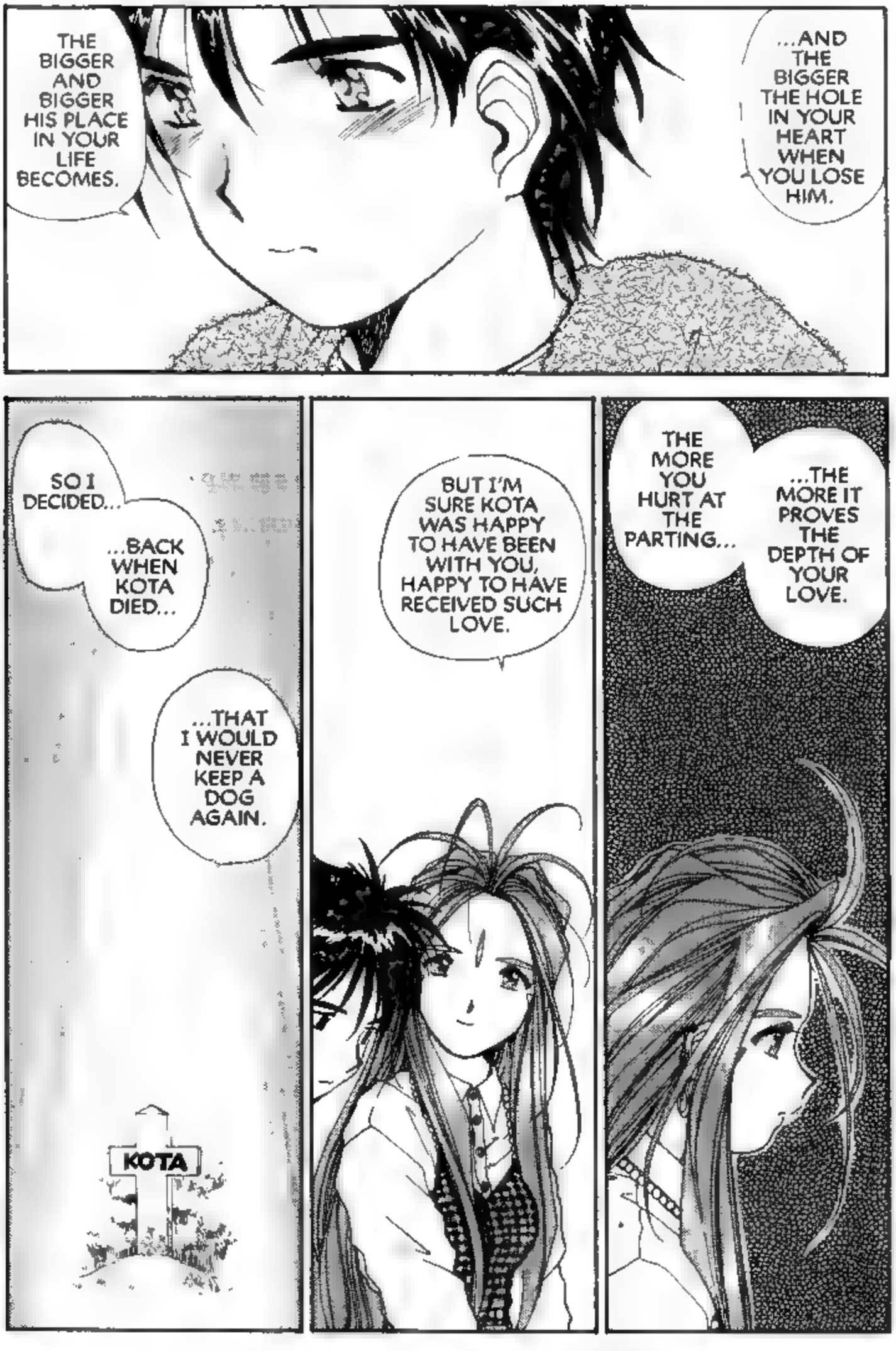




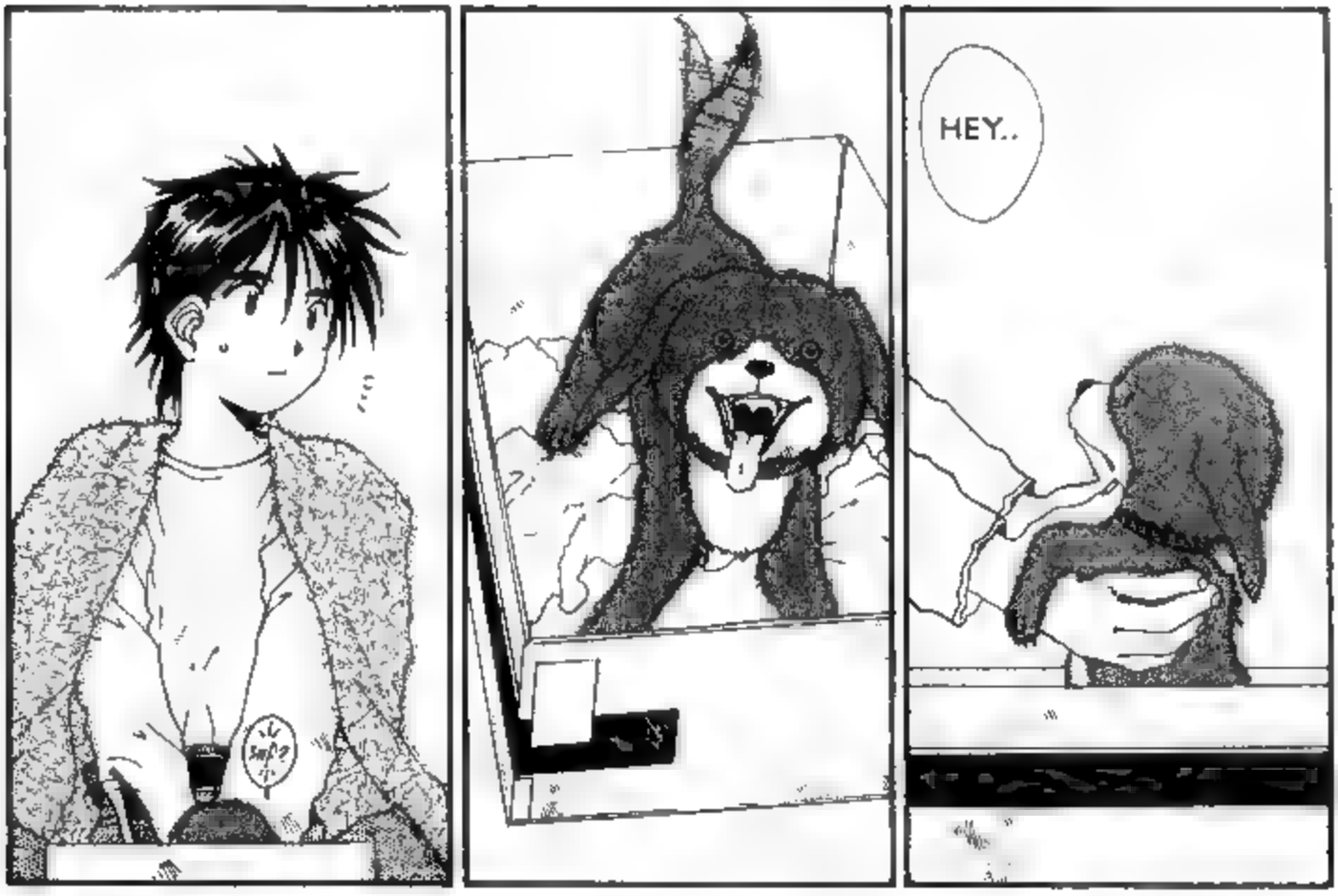
KOTA!
THERE! FETCH IT, KOTA!

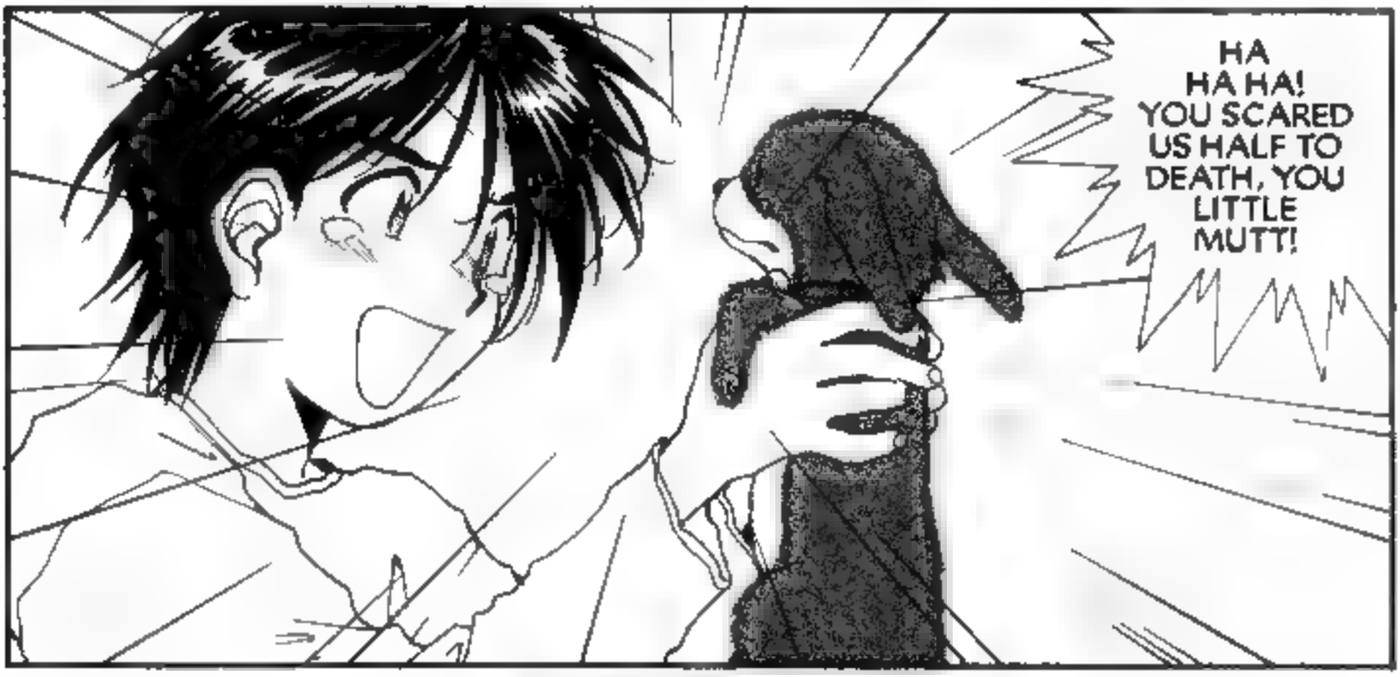

!!
!!
KOTA
KOTA

KOTA
KEIICHI ...?
KEIICHI .?
AH ..?
WHAT'S TROUBLING YOU, DEAR?
IT'S NOT THAT I HATE HIM, BELL. IT'S NOT THAT AT ALL.
HMM ...?
IT'S JUST.. I CAN'T.
THE MORE YOU LIKE HIM THE MORE YOU LOVE HIM


THE BIGGER AND BIGGER HIS PLACE IN YOUR LIFE BECOMES.
...AND THE BIGGER THE HOLE IN YOUR HEART WHEN YOU LOSE HIM.
THE MORE YOU HURT AT THE PARTING...
...THE MORE IT PROVES THE DEPTH OF YOUR LOVE.
BUT I'M SURE KOTA WAS HAPPY TO HAVE BEEN WITH YOU, HAPPY TO HAVE RECEIVED SUCH LOVE.
SO I DECIDED...
...BACK WHEN KOTA DIED...
...THAT I WOULD NEVER KEEP A DOG AGAIN.
KOTA

IF YOU ALWAYS FEAR SORROW
YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO LOVE AT ALL


HEY..


HA HA HA! YOU SCARED US HALF TO DEATH, YOU LITTLE MUTT!

JOY, TOO..
...IS THE PROOF OF LOVE

BELLDANDY! I FINISHED MY SKULD1 SUPERVET MACHINE!
CHECK IT OUT-- URD'S POWER BOOSTER BODY REBUILDER!
MNCH
C'MON, BOY-- RUN!!
PIW♪♬EET

KEIICHI!
LOOK WHAT I'VE GOT!
UH-OH... SHE FOUND SOMEONE TO TAKE HIM...?
NO!! IT'S NOT THAT!
...WE'LL KEEP HIM, OKAY?
OH, GEE... I'M SORRY, MEG. I KNOW I ASKED YOU TO LOOK FOR SOMEONE, BUT I DECIDED...
I... I FOUND HIS REAL OWNER!
HAVE YOU SEEN THIS DOG?
BIG REWARD!
NAME MARRON AGE ONE MONTH
DISTINGUISHING MARKS: JOINT BELOW WITH CREAM MUZZLE AND BELLY
CUTE DANG...NG EARS
PLEASE CALL 555-3395

THANK YOU! THANK YOU SO VERY, VERY MUCH!
SKULD...? DON'T YOU WANT TO SAY GOOD-BYE TO HIM?
YOU'RE A LUCKY DOG, MARRON.
OOPS!
OH ...?!
CHOMP
OH, DEAR... HE MUST HAVE REALLY GOTTEN TO LIKE YOU.
NOW... NOW I FEEL BAD TAKING HIM BACK...

HUH ..?

WELL, HE HAS A BAD HABIT OF NIPPING PEOPLE HE LIKES, THE SILLY THING

I'D BEEN TRYING TO GET HIM TO STOP

MNCH MNCH

BUT I WAS THE ONLY PERSON HE'D EVER DONE IT TO... UNTIL NOW.

SAY.. LET'S GO VISIT MARRON TODAY!

SURE!

AND FROM THEN ON, KEIICHI AND THE GANG WOULD SOMETIMES GO...

TO GET KEIICHI'S SLEEVE CHEWED UP A LITTLE MORE.

DARK HORSE COMICS

Manga

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Oh My Goddess!

ああ女神さま

THE DEVIL IN MISS URD

KARAOKE HELL

BUS STOP

MAN, ARE WE EVER LUCKY-- WINNING A VACATION AT A NICE HOT SPRING RESORT LIKE THIS!

GONNA SWILL ME A BARREL OF SAKE...!

ARE THEY LEAF SPRINGS OR COIL SPRINGS ...?

KEIICHI, YOU'RE SURE LUCKIER THAN YOU LOOK.

I SAY IT'S *WEIRD.* KEIICHI SAID HE NEVER EVEN *ENTERED* ANY CONTEST!

WAIT-- *YOU* MUST HAVE ENTERED HIM, DIDN'T YOU, SIS?

MUST BE, HUH? THANKS, BELLDANDY.

BUT I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING ...!

US, EITHER!

....

....

HEH...

HA HA HA! BUT IT'S COOL, RIGHT?!

YEAH!! WE CAN'T GO HOME AFTER COMING ALL THIS WAY, HUH?

BUT IF IT'S A MISTAKE, THEN THE PEOPLE WHO REALLY WON...

INN DAI-KOKU-

CHILL OUT, BELL!

THE TICKETS CAME ADDRESSED TO KEIICHI...

...SO MEGUMI OR SOME-BODY MUST HAVE ENTERED HIM.

INN DAI-KOKU-YA

I WONDER ...?

HEH HEH ...!

INN DAI-KOKU-YA

HO HO HO! SIMPLE FELLOWS YOU ALL BEING!

N I- KU- A

BECAUSE I MAKE YOU WIN PRIZE, SENBEI HAPPY LEVEL GO *SO* LOW.

INN DAI-KOKU-YA

FWIT

BUT SOON NOW I MAKE YOU UNHAPPY, SO MY HAPPY LEVEL GO HIGH, HIGH, *HIGH!!*

"THANK" YOU KEIICHI.

HEY, KEIICHI! YOU GOT A 100 YEN COIN?

WHAT FOR?

THE *TV*... TEE-VEE!

IT WON'T TURN ON IF I DON'T PUT IN A COIN.

100 YEN= ONE HOUR

INSERT COIN SLOWLY

NOW LISTEN CARE-FULLY, URD.

THIS IS A *HOT SPRING* RESORT.

I KNOW THAT. SO?

AND A HOT SPRING MEANS... *HOT SPRING POOLS* TO SOAK IN!

"ESCAPING THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF THE CITY, ENJOYING THE CRYSTAL AIR AND BEAUTIFUL SCENERY OF THE COUNTRY...

"...NOT TO MENTION THAT, IN TRADITIONAL OLD RESORTS LIKE THIS ONE, THE MEN'S AND WOMEN'S BATHS ARE OFTEN *NOT SEPARATED!*

"AND SO, EMERGING FROM THE SWIRLING VEILS OF STEAM..."

ANYTHING TO SAVE A QUARTER, THAT SKIN-FLINT.

YOU OKAY, KEIICHI?

AH... PARDON ME. I FORGOT TO MENTION THIS EARLIER...

...BUT HERE AT DAIKOKU-YA WE SERVE SAKÉ IN THE OUTDOOR BATHS.

WHATCHA WAITING FOR, KEIICHI?! BATH TIME!
OH, URD! WAIT...
HEH, HEH!
LET THE UNHAPPY BEGIN!
POOR KEIICHI! ❤
WHAT AN UNFORTUNATE ARRANGEMENT, HMM?
AND JUST WHAT IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN, HUH, URD?!

SLAM

THE SENTENCE: TWO DAYS OF INCREDIBLE DISAPPOINTMENT

LIFE SUCKS. .

SPLSSH

THIS IS SO WONDERFUL!

DECENT SAKÉ, TOO.

IS THAT ALL YOU CARE ABOUT?

GOSH, IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE ALL THREE OF US TOOK A BATH TOGETHER.

YEAH... THAT REMINDS ME... I WONDER IF SKULD'S A LITTLE MORE "GROWN UP" NOW...?

IN THE CHEST DEPARTMENT, I MEAN..

?!

URD!! S-STOP IT!

YOU'RE NOT GONNA START *THAT* AGAIN?!

YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT! BEWARE THE "BIG SISTER BUST SIZE CHECK"...!

YO HO HO!

EEK!

NO! STOP IT!

EEK!

WOW! THEY HAVEN'T GROWN A BIT!

WHAT THE DEVIL ARE THEY DOING OVER THERE...?

JUST HIS IMAGINATION, BUT UNCANNILY ACCURATE.

DAMN IT ALL!! IF ONLY...

...IF ONLY I'D BEEN BORN A WOMAN!!

HUH ...?

WHOA ...?

SPLSH

W- WHAT IS A GIRL DOING IN THE MEN'S BATH?

WHO CARES?! *LUCKY!!*

phewww

WH-?!

ACK?!

M...
MARA?!

YOU...
YOU
PERVERT!!

WHAT
ARE
YOU
DOING
HERE?!

AIEEE!!

KWICHH!!

KEIICHI! ARE YOU OKAY?!

HEY!

MARA !?!

!!

YEEK!

KEIICHI! WHAT ARE YOU HIDING? DID MARA DO SOMETHING TO YOU?!

NO, NO, I'M JUST... HEH HEH...

OH, YOU POOR DEAR! LET ME SEE!

SHE REALLY ISN'T DOING THIS ON PURPOSE, IS SHE?

NOPE. SCARY, AIN'T IT...?

WAHH! STOP! I SWEAR, SHE DIDN'T--!

JUST GET OUT! ALL OF YOU!

WHAT THE GODDESS ARE THEY DOING OVER THERE?

TOO AFRAID TO GO SEE ↑

105

SO, LIKE I SAID, WE CAME UP HERE FOR *R&R.*

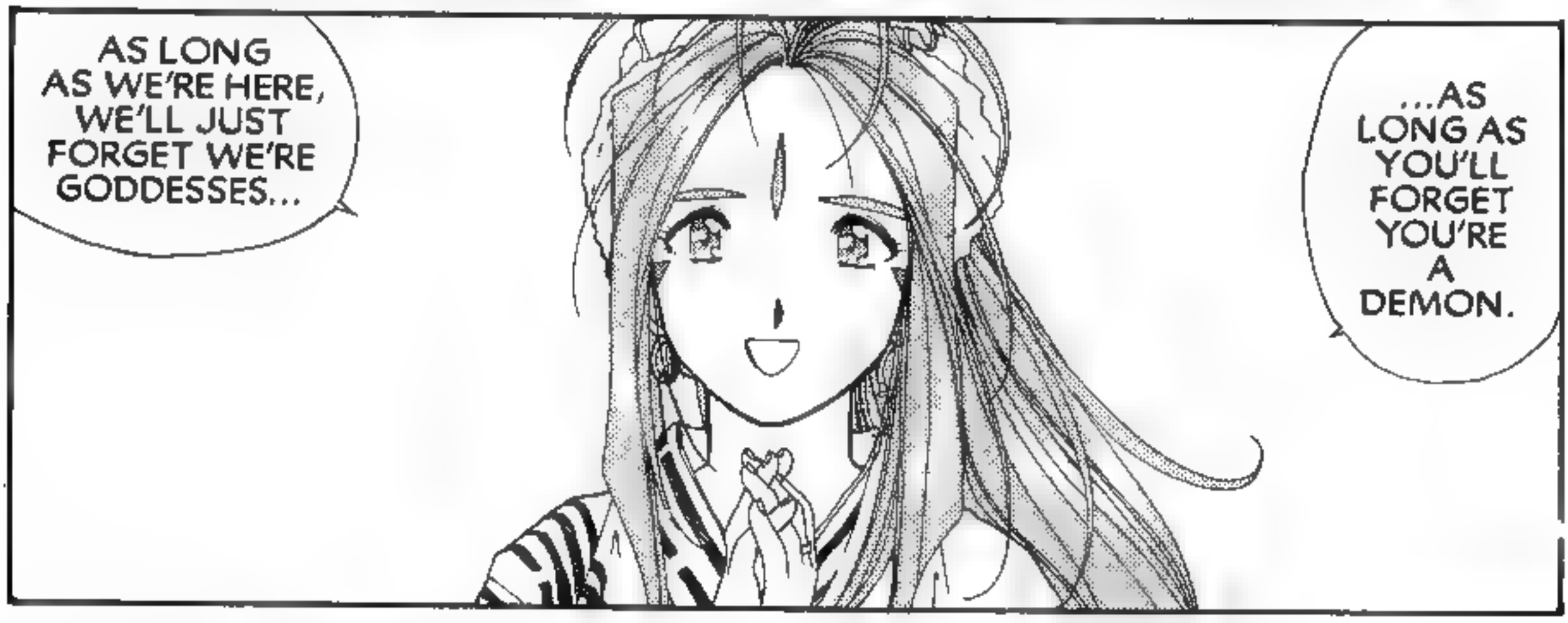
I HARDLY EVER GET ANY TIME OFF, SO I DON'T FEEL LIKE FIGHTING.

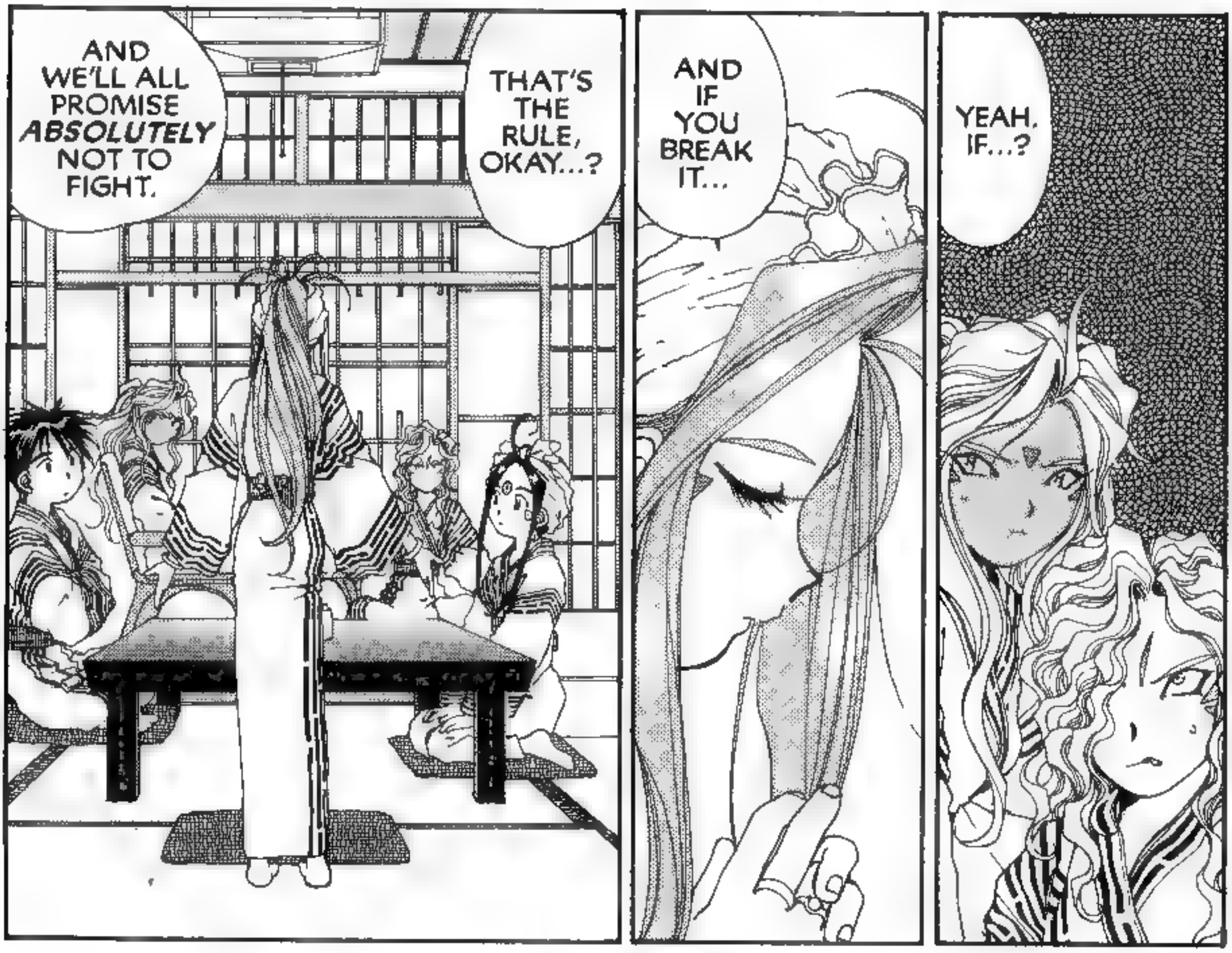
YEAH, SAME HERE.

PSSHT

WE DIDN'T COME TO A HOT SPRING TO HAVE IT OUT WITH YOU.

IN THAT CASE, HERE'S WHAT WE'LL DO!


AS LONG AS WE'RE HERE, WE'LL JUST FORGET WE'RE GODDESSES...
...AS LONG AS YOU'LL FORGET YOU'RE A DEMON.


AND WE'LL ALL PROMISE *ABSOLUTELY* NOT TO FIGHT.
THAT'S THE RULE, OKAY...?
AND IF YOU BREAK IT...
YEAH. IF...?

I WILL PUNISH YOU.

KNOWING HOW SHE IS MOST OF THE TIME...

THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT SHE'LL COME UP WITH!

SURE!

DO WE ALL AGREE?

YEAH, YEAH.

OKAY.. I GUESS..

BY THE WAY, MARA... YOU SAID "*WE* CAME UP HERE FOR SOME *R&R*." WHO ELSE IS HERE...?

DID I SAY THAT...? SLIP OF THE TONGUE!

EXCUSE ME, FOLKS...? DINNER'S READY NOW.

PLEASE COME TO THE BANQUET HALL.

YES, MA'AM... WE'RE COMING.

YAA HA HA HA!!

GARÇON!! MORE *SAKE!*

ME, TOO!!

ICE CREAM FOR ME!

MAY I PLEASE HAVE SOME MORE TEA?

I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT *THEY'RE* TIPSY, TOO!

WHAT *ODD* YOUNG LADIES...

KEIICHI, YA WIMP! STOP STUFFIN' YOUR FACE AND DRINK SOME BOOZE!

HEH... IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE WE DRANK TOGETHER.

WE USED TO GO OUT TOGETHER ALL THE TIME, BEFORE WE GOT THESE JOBS... DIDN'T WE?

HUH? THOSE TWO USED TO LIKE EACH OTHER?

YES, INDEED.

IN FACT, I'M SURE THEY STILL DO.

YEAH, YEAH... REMEMBER?

THAT TIME YA PUT THE BUG IN MY BOOZE?!

RIGHT, RIGHT! AND YOU DUMPED POISON IN MINE TO GET BACK AT ME!

...
...

GRRR

AND TA' MAKE UP, WE SENT EACH OTHER FLOWERS!

YEAH! AND WE *BOTH* PUT *BLAST FLOWERS* IN THE BOUQUETS!

GRRR

YAHOO! LET'S GO PLAY PING-PONG!

THEY *REALLY* USED TO LIKE EACH OTHER...?

YES.

FRIENDSHIP...

...AND LOVE... COMES IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES.

BUT, YOU KNOW... MARA... SOMEHOW SHE SEEMS SO... TIRED.

THE MARA *DEVIL SERVE!*

YEEP!

BWA HA HA HA!!

THAT'S THREE-ZERO.

GAME, SET AND MATCH TO *MARA!*

GRRR!

HEH HEH

I'VE BEEN PRACTICING A BIT, MY DEAR URD!

YOU DARE TO DEFEAT *ME*, I WHO HAVE PLAYED PING-PONG AT COUNTLESS TACKY RESORTS AROUND THE UNIVERSE?!

THEN I CHALLENGE THEE AT VIDEO GAMES!

MARA'S SO FUNNY, ISN'T SHE!

BREEP!

BZAP!

MY, MY... YOU CAN'T EVEN CLEAR LEVEL ONE...?

I CAN PLAY ALL NIGHT ON ONE COIN

DAMMIT!

IF *YOU* WEREN'T A GOD-DESS...

AND I WASN'T A DEMON...

...WE COULD HANG OUT TOGETHER LIKE THIS EVERY DAY!

DAMN IT!

WHAM

WELL, MARA, THAT'S NOT EXACTLY TRUE.

IT'S *BECAUSE* YOU'RE A DEMON...

...AND *BECAUSE* I'M A GODDESS, THAT WE MET AT ALL.

SO I'M THANKFUL, REALLY...

...THAT I CAN AT LEAST FIGHT YOU AS A GODDESS FIRST CLASS.

EVEN IF ONLY HALF OF ME IS GODDESS BLOOD...

SO... SHE *DOES* KNOW SHE'S HALF DEMON!

AND SHE STILL CHOSE TO BE A GOD-DESS...

HEH.

SO... WHAT NEXT? WE'RE EVEN... ONE-ONE.

I CAN'T TOLERATE A DEMON BEATING A GODDESS.

LET'S MAKE THIS THE BEST TWO OUT OF THREE AND FOR THE NEXT ROUND--

--KARAOKE WAR!

LET'S RENT A KARAOKE MACHINE!

I ACCEPT, URD!

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE, EVERY MOVE...!

GONNA BREAK MY RUSTY CAGE...!

TA-DAAAH!

A KARAOKE COMPETITION BETWEEN A GODDESS AND A DEMON.

I GUESS I'M SEEING HISTORY IN THE MAKING...

WONDERFUL!

AND NOW! MY EXCLUSIVE DESIGN...

...SKULD'S KARAOKE SCORING MACHINE!

GOOD-NESS! WHO ON EARTH ...?!

TA-DAAAH!

URD 72

MARA 72

I SCORED THE SAME AS HER?!

WHADDYA MEAN, "72" ...?!

IT MEANS *YOU STINK.*

HEY, YOU GOT THE *SAME SCORE!!*

ALL RIGHT! NO MORE MISS NICE GODDESS!

...SICK OF MYSELF WHEN I LOOK AT YOU...

...WE ARE, SOMETIMES IT BLOWS MY MIND...

URD 63

MARA 63

FORGET IT!

BKOOM

YEAH, YOU CAN'T TRUST MACHINES.

WAAH!

YOU REALLY *ARE* A DEMON!

AN EVIL BIGGER THAN YOU COULD KNOW...

HEH... TIME FOR A CHANGE OF PACE HERE...

HUH?!

OH... OH, NO!! MARA, YOU DEMON!

NOT...

NOT... AUSTRIAN POLKAS...

♪ YOU CAN TELL BY THE WAY I USE ♫ ♪ MY WALK... ♫

WHEN URD HEARS POLKAS, SHE FALLS ASLEEP ↑

AND WH- WHAT ABOUT YOU!

ARG!

MAKING...

MAKING ME TO LISTEN TO *DISCO?!*

WHEN MARA HEARS DISCO SHE CAN'T STOP DANCING ↑

GONNA POLKA ♫ OUR BRAINS OUT!!

♫ AT THE Y-M-C-A ...!! ♫

PLEASE! REMEMBER THE RULE-- *NO FIGHTING!!*

THE END IS COMING.. CLEAR THE DECKS!

I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY-MORE!

LIGHTNING STRIKE!!

DAMMIT! I KNEW YOU WERE A GODDESS AT HEART!

HELLFIRE THUNDER BLAST!!

≠hahh≠

≠hff≠

≠hahh≠

YOU BOTH BROKE YOUR PROMISE.

UH-OH!

AND SO...

I PRONOUNCE YOUR PUNISHMENT.

≠urk≠

≠ulp≠

True Friends

True Friends

Take Hand in Hand

Open Your Hearts

UOHHHH! MY BODY! I CAN'T...

...Raise Sweet Songs of Amity!

IT'S MOVING! I... I CAN'T STOP...

And Together...

FAP

VREEE CLICK K-CHAK!

I THOUGHT SHE WAS MY ENEMY BUT WHEN WE TALKED

IT'S NOT FAIR!

I FOUND I WAS WRONG

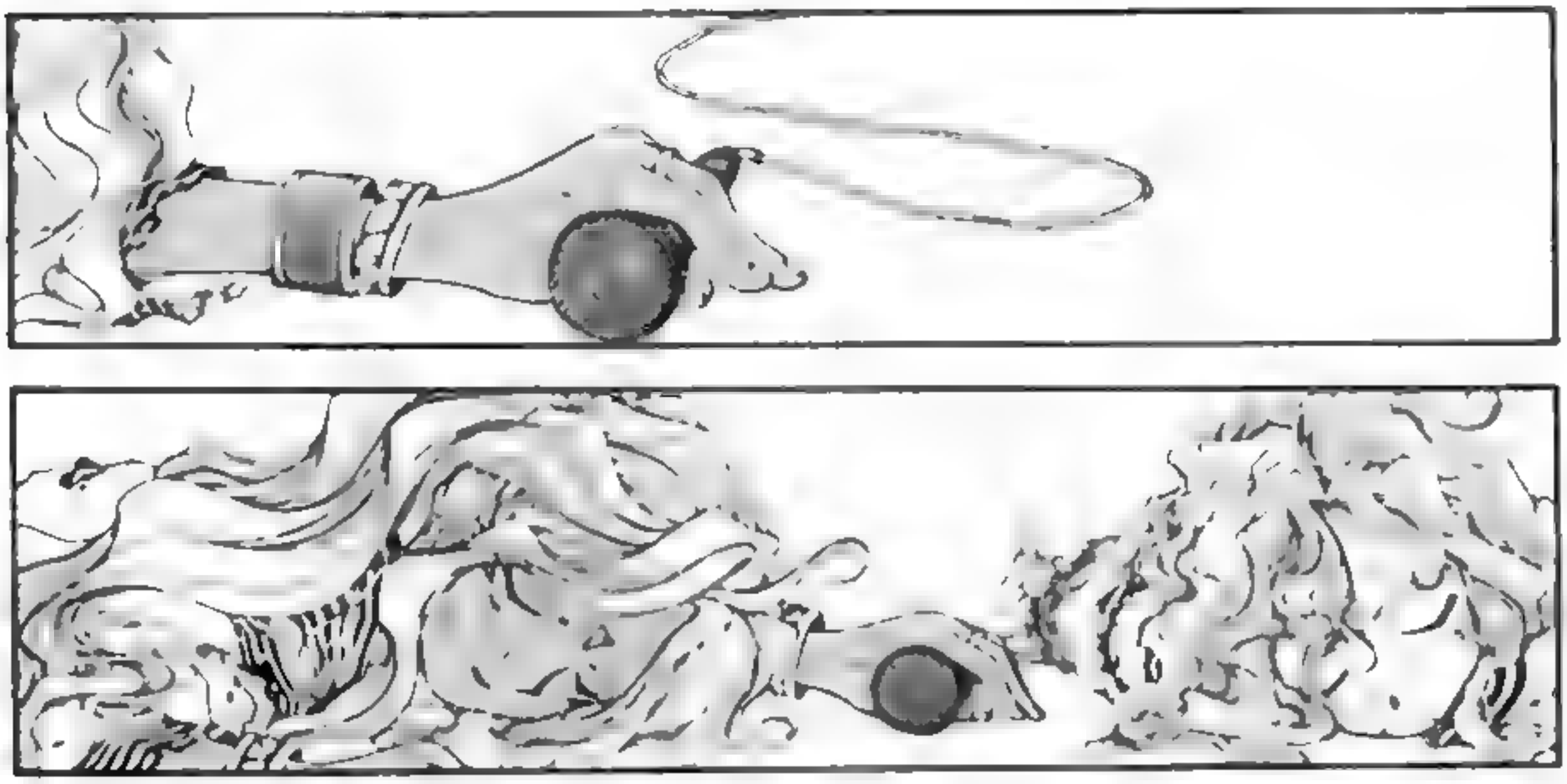
EVERYBODY'S BEST OF FRIENDS!

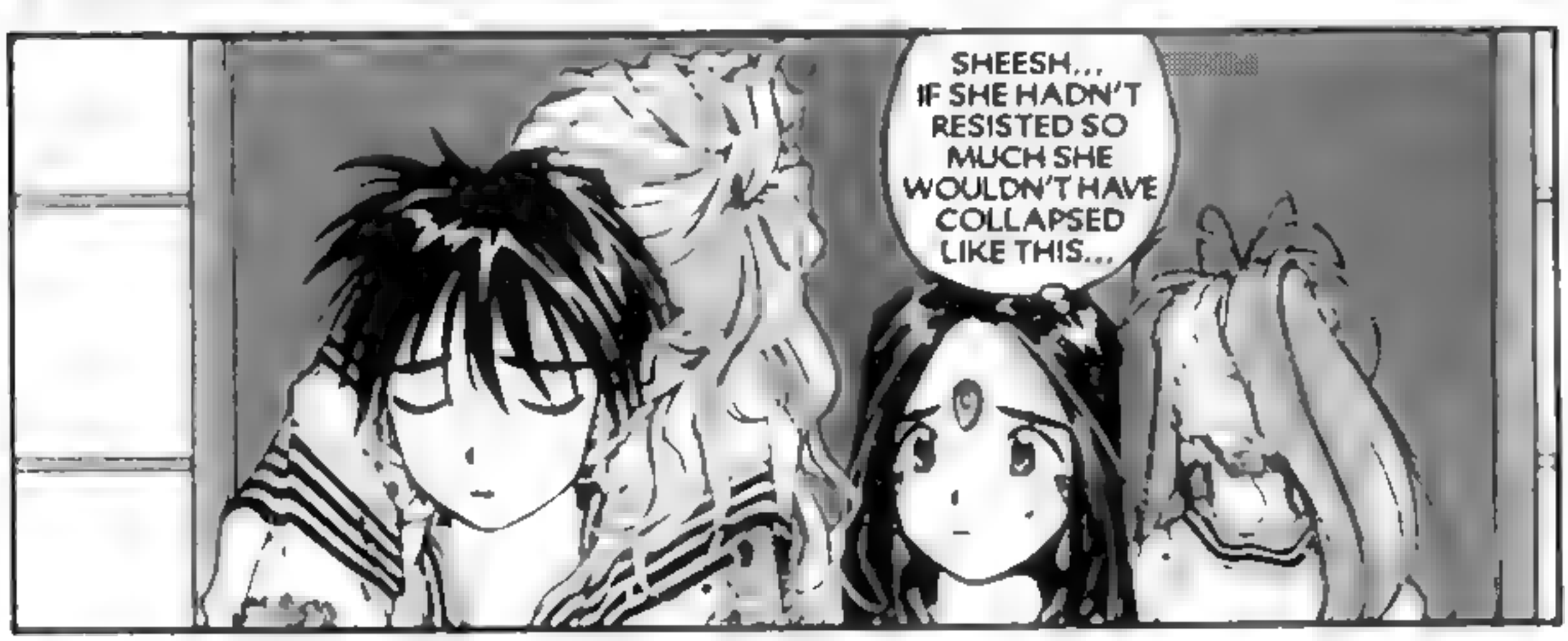
BEST OF FRIENDS

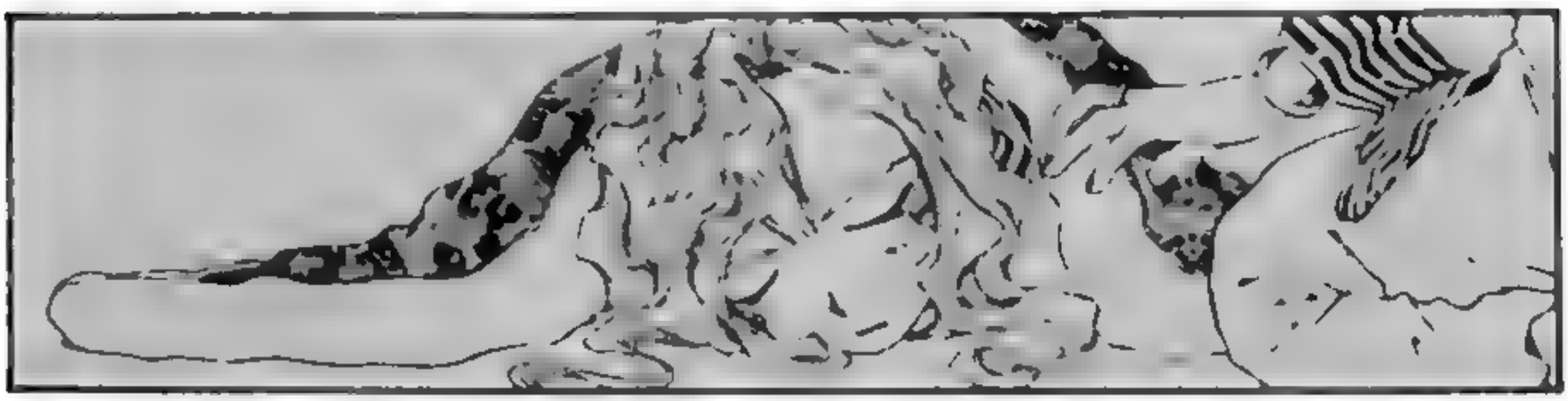
THE HORROR...

ENCORE!

FRIENDS... FRIENDS... BEST OF FRIENDS!




SHEESH... IF SHE HADN'T RESISTED SO MUCH SHE WOULDN'T HAVE COLLAPSED LIKE THIS...



MARA... I...
WELL, MY JOB DOESN'T LET ME WISH YOU LUCK.

BUT I WISH YOU WELL JUST THE SAME, OKAY...?

SLAM

YOU WISH ME WELL... REALLY?

WE'LL BE BACK! THANK YOU!

I WONDER WHEN WE'LL GET TO DRINK TOGETHER AGAIN, MARA...?

URD! THE BUS IS COMING!

IT'S OH RESOR

STATION

ARE THEY GONE?

YES, MASTER!

DID YOU GET A STRAND OF HER HAIR?

OF COURSE! TAKE FROM BATHROOM DRAIN!

URD...

IT WAS A BLAST.

BUT THE FUN IS JUST BEGINNING!

NEXT ISSUE: EVIL SPIRITS--200 PROOF!

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JUST *LOOK* AT THIS!!

IT WAS ALMOST *FINISHED,* URD!

SORRY. SO, SO SORRY.

C'MON, KIDDO...

...YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET SO HYPER JUST BECAUSE YOUR STUPID BOMB GOT BUSTED.

IT'S *NOT* A BOMB!

IT'S A MACHINE FOR GETTING THINGS DOWN FROM HIGH PLACES!

OH, YEAH--I FORGET WHAT A SHORTY YOU ARE.

NOT AGAIN...

LIFE'S LITTLE NECESSITIES, HMM...?

I HOPE YOU *NEVER* COME BACK!!

MM...? GOING OUT, URD?

MORE LIKE *EVACUATING.* THAT DAMN SKULD...

WELL, HAVE A NICE TIME.

LOOK... DO SOMETHING NICE FOR THE KID WHEN YOU'VE GOT A CHANCE, OKAY? I'M HOPELESS AT IT.

THAT'S PRETTY IRRESPON-SIBLE...

NOT REALLY.

IT'S JUST URD'S WAY OF LOOKING OUT FOR OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS.

IT'S TRUE, KEIICHI.

WELL, IF YOU SAY SO...

かりめろ

CABIN

31's ICE CREAM

THANK YOU, MA'AM!

BROTHER... I'M JUST TOO NICE FOR WORDS TODAY...

OH, RIGHT! ALMOST FORGOT!

?! WHO--

WHILE I'M HERE I CAN STOCK UP MY MEDICINE CABINET.

...

JUST A *DOG* ...?

PRETTY LAME, URD. MAYBE YOU'RE LOSING--

WHIST

HUH?!

A-AUSTRIAN POLKAS ...?!

THEY WON'T COME OFF!

OOMPAH OOMPAH OOMPAH

"TAKE *THAT!* THE CURSE OF THE *DEMON HEAD-PHONES!*"

MA....

MARA ...!!

G-GOTTA SING. SOME DISCO. TO STOP HER..

Ka-Ra Kasputin... Lover of the Queen...

FORGET IT, BABE! NO WAY YOU CAN BOOGIE...

...WITH YOUR EARS FULL OF POLKAS!

HA HA HA HA

I... BLEW IT...

D-DAMN.

七月
JULY

SHE'S A BIT LATE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, A *BIT* LATE...?

...

GEE WHIZ!!

ISN'T THERE *ANYTHING* INTEREST-ING ON TONIGHT?!

KLIK KLIK

TYPICAL... SHE'S *SO* SELFISH!!

...

I'M GOING TO GO LOOK FOR HER.

ME, TOO!

TIK

TOK

KEIICHI... EVEN *URD* WOULD AT LEAST CALL... I'M SURE!

KSSHH

...

KSSHH

MARA'S HIDE-OUT

HUH ...?

HEY ...?!

GULP

BLRBBB

CHAK

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA, MARA?!

YOU MEAN THE PUNISHMENT I'VE ARRANGED FOR YOU...?

OR PERHAPS...

...YOU MEAN THIS *PERFECT REPLICA*...

THAT I'VE CLONED FROM A STRAND OF YOUR HAIR?!

BLOOD

BLOOD

SO SO *THAT'S* IT!

THAT'S WHY YOU AT THE HOT SPRINGS!

HOW SWEET. I *LOVE* IT.

A GIRL WHO CAN THINK *OFF* HER FEET!

YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING WITH WITH THAT *CHEESY FAKE!*

RIGHT YOU ARE

I MAY BE ABLE TO COPY THE *BODY* OF URD...

...BUT THIS LITTLE BEAUTY DOESN'T HAVE A SOUL.

WHICH MEANS I'LL JUST HAVE TO IMPOSE ON YOU A BIT MORE...

...UNTIL I CAN EXTRACT THE *DEVIL* OUT OF YOU, MY HALF-BLOODED LITTLE GODDESS...

...AND TRANS-PLANT IT INTO *HER!*

HMPH!

DON'T TELL ME...

MM-MMM...♡

YOU ♥ KNOW, ♥ DAHHLING...

I HAFF ALVAYS ADORED ♥ MEIN LITTLE KEIICHI...

UH?!

COME, DAHHLING... DO VITH ME VAT ♥ YOU VILL...

?!

!!

KEIICHI ...?!

HO. HO. HO!

GOODBYE FOREVER!!

SO? AM I RIGHT?

OH, *WOW!* THAT'S A COOL IDEA!

DON'T TELL ME SHE REALLY DIDN'T HAVE ANY PLAN ...?

SENBEI! PREPARE FOR TRANS-PLANT!

YOU CAN'T DO IT!

EVEN THE ALMIGHTY COULDN'T DO IT.

MY HEAVEN AND HELL ARE INSEPAR-ABLE!

HEH ...!

PERHAPS. AND YET...

I, MARA, CAN!

I'VE OBTAINED THE HERESY OF ALL HERESIES, A PERSONALITY SEPARATION PRECIPITATOR!

AND JUST WHERE DID YOU GET THAT...

...THAT THING?

THE ACME NOVELTY SUPPLY COMPANY!

...

YOU'RE GOING TO USE A PIECE OF JUNK LIKE THAT...

...ON *ME?!*

INITIATE TRANS-PLANTA-TION!

YES, SIR, MA'AM, SIR!

OFF

ON

KACHAK

OFF

ON

AH ...!

UHN!

NO...!

AAH!!

FNNK

FNNK

!

...

BRMMM

ANY SIGN OF URD...?

NOT YET.

AND... AND WHO CARES, ANYWAY?! WHO CARES IF THAT WITCH *EVER* COMES HOME?!

DON'T WORRY, SKULD.

I MEAN, IF THERE'S ANYONE WHO CAN TAKE CARE OF HERSELF, IT'S URD.

I AM *NOT* WORRIED!

SURE, SURE..

KEIICHI!

SHSSS

LOOK WHAT I FOUND, NEAR THAT DRUG STORE SHE ALWAYS GOES TO!

THERE SHOULD BE A SPIRIT IMPRINT.

I'LL INVOKE IT...

SSSHHH

BROTHER... I'M JUST TOO NICE FOR WORDS TODAY...

SHSSSS

IT WAS URD!

?! WHO--

ICE CREAM ...?

F... FOR ME...?

JUST A DOG ...?

HUH?!

IT... STOPPED?

I WONDER--

OOMPAH OOMPAH PAH PAH

WHA- WHA-

WHAT THE HECK?!

IT'S MARA!

OOMPAH

MARA MADE HER LISTEN TO AUSTRIAN POLKAS!

THAT ALWAYS PUTS URD RIGHT TO SLEEP!

THEN... SHE'S BEEN *KIDNAPPED BY MARA?!*

PROBABLY...

HMM?

BANPEI!

URD, YOU BIG DUMMY!

HOW COME YOU GOTTA BE SO MUCH TROUBLE?!

BREEP

BEEP

EMERGENCY MODE
MEMORY STORAGE

RATS... HIS BATTERY'S DEAD.

DON'T TELL ME...

SHE'S NOT *REALLY* KIDNAPPED, IS SHE?

I NEVER SHOULD HAVE SAID WHAT I SAID...

I HOPE YOU NEVER COME BACK!!

I DIDN'T MEAN IT!!

GMPH!

GMP

WHAT IN THE WORLD ...?

OH ...!

URD!!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT SO LATE?

YOU BIG DUMMY! WHAT DO YOU *THINK?!*

I WAS AFRAID YOU'D BEEN KIDNAPPED BY MARA OR SOMETHING!

YOU DOPEY LITTLE KID!

YOU REALLY THOUGHT THAT ...?

THERE'S NO WAY *THAT* COULD HAVE HAPPENED.

AFTER ALL...

...THE ONE GETTING KIDNAPPED IS *YOU!*

HUH ...?

EEK! NOOO!

HO HO HO!

SO? HOW DO YOU LIKE IT?

BEING SUCKED STRAIGHT INTO YOUR OWN STUPID FACE!

EWK

ZZZ

PLEASE, URD! *STOP!*

WH-- WHY ARE YOU SO ANGRY WITH ME?!

I'M NOT, IN THE LEAST.

YOU'RE JUST... SORT OF *MILDLY ANNOYING,* THAT'S ALL!

NOOOO!

HEH HEH

HMM... WASN'T THAT A BIT... HARSH?

OH, COME ON!!

THAT WAS JUST THE BEGINNING.

OH NO! DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE

THE LORD OF TERROR AGAIN?!

OH REALLY, MAMA DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND ANYTHING?

I'M JUST ONE

DEMON URD!

* SEE THE ONG SERIES, "TERRIBLE MASTER URD"

NEXT ISSUE: SKULD STRIKES BACK!

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Skuld Strikes Back!

KEIICHI!

IT'S *BANPEI* ...!

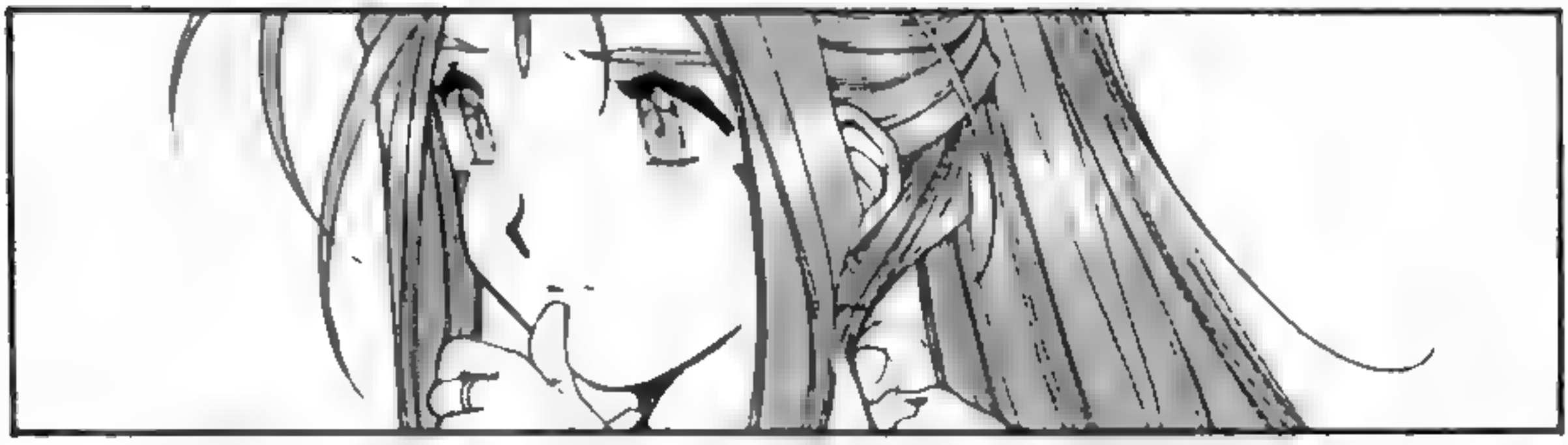
HUH?

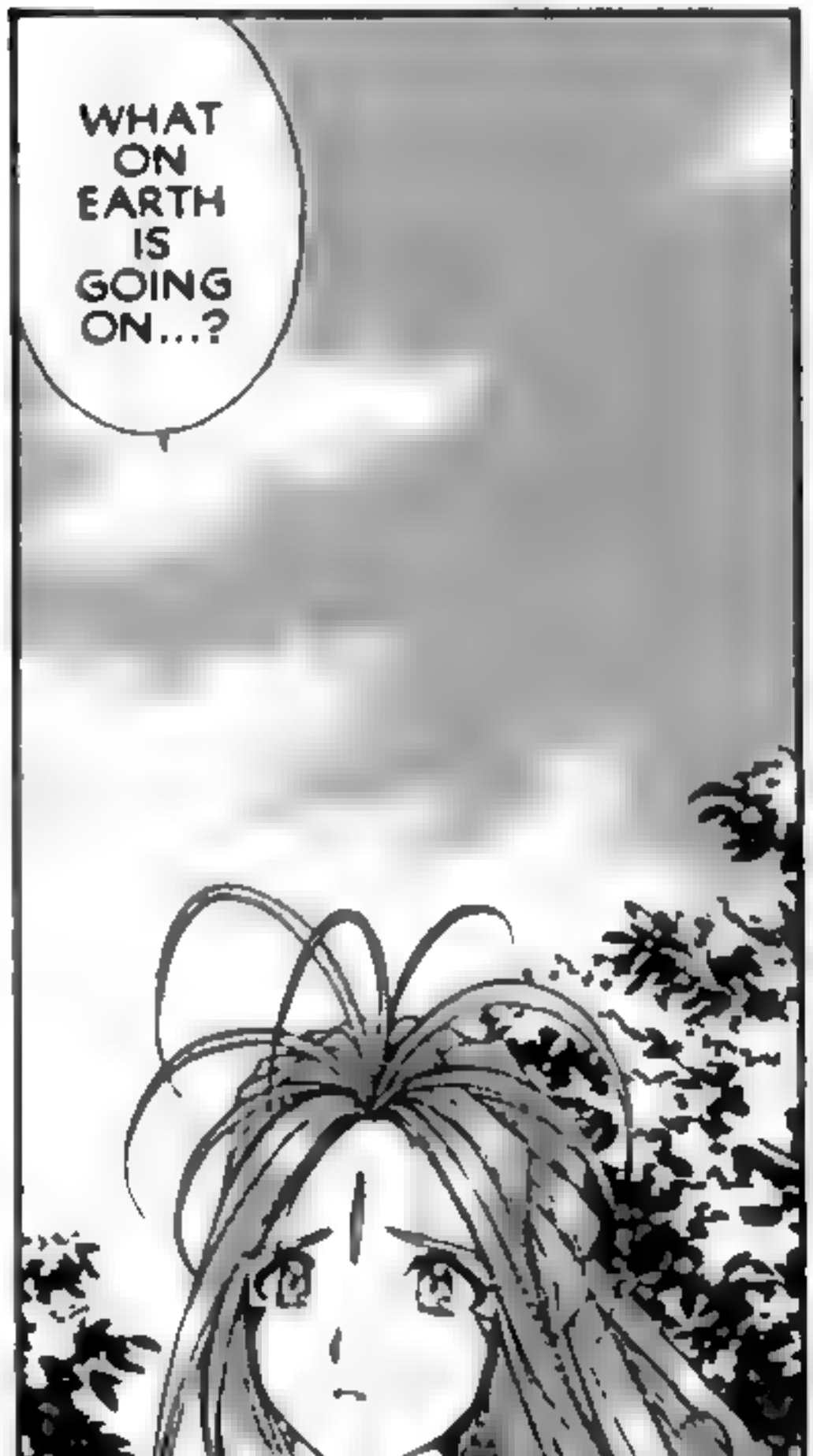
WHERE IS HE?!

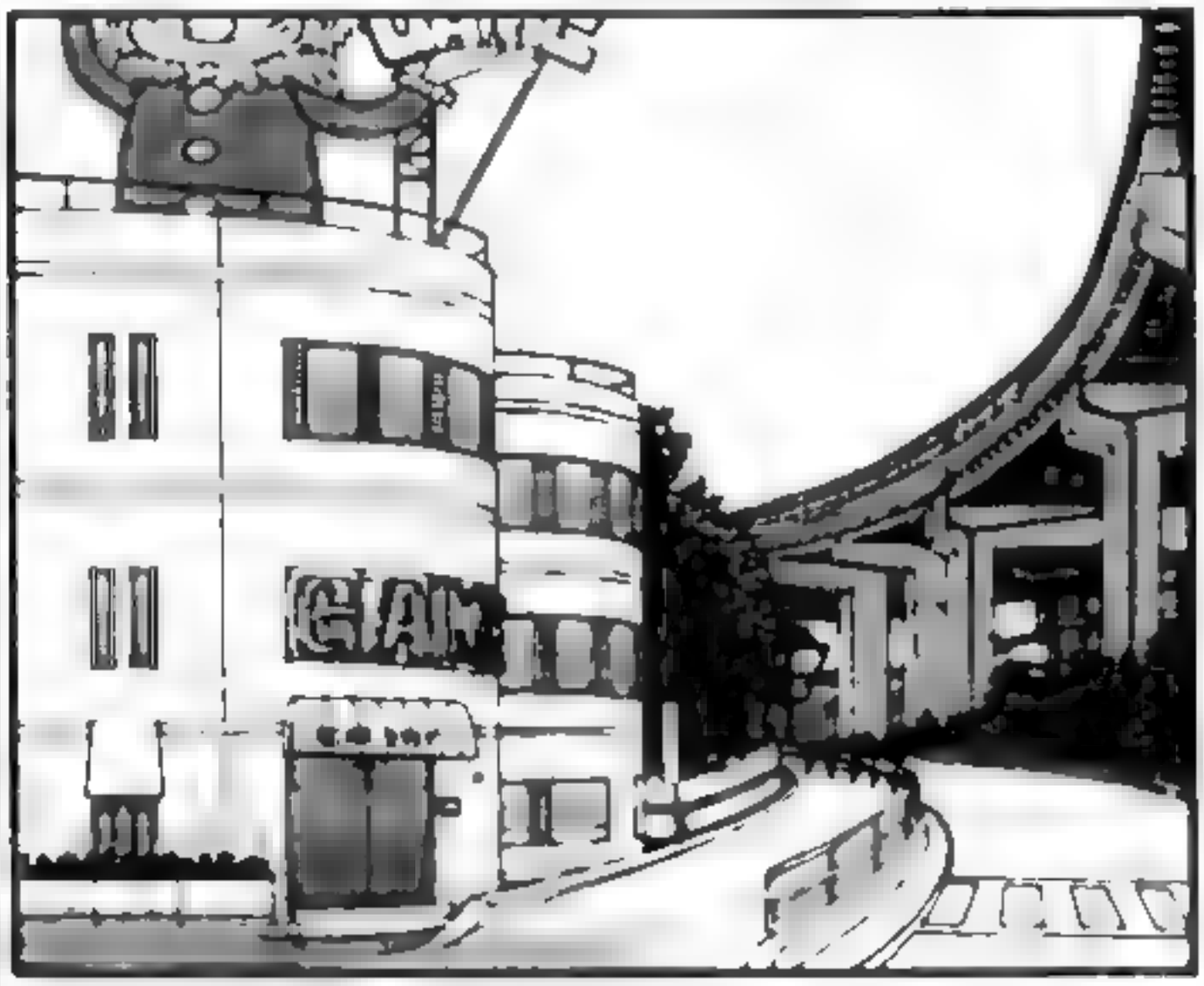
FOLLOW ME!

EMERGENCY MODE
AUTO-SAVE

LOOKS LIKE HIS BATTERY'S BEEN DEAD FOR QUITE A WHILE, BELL...




WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING ON...?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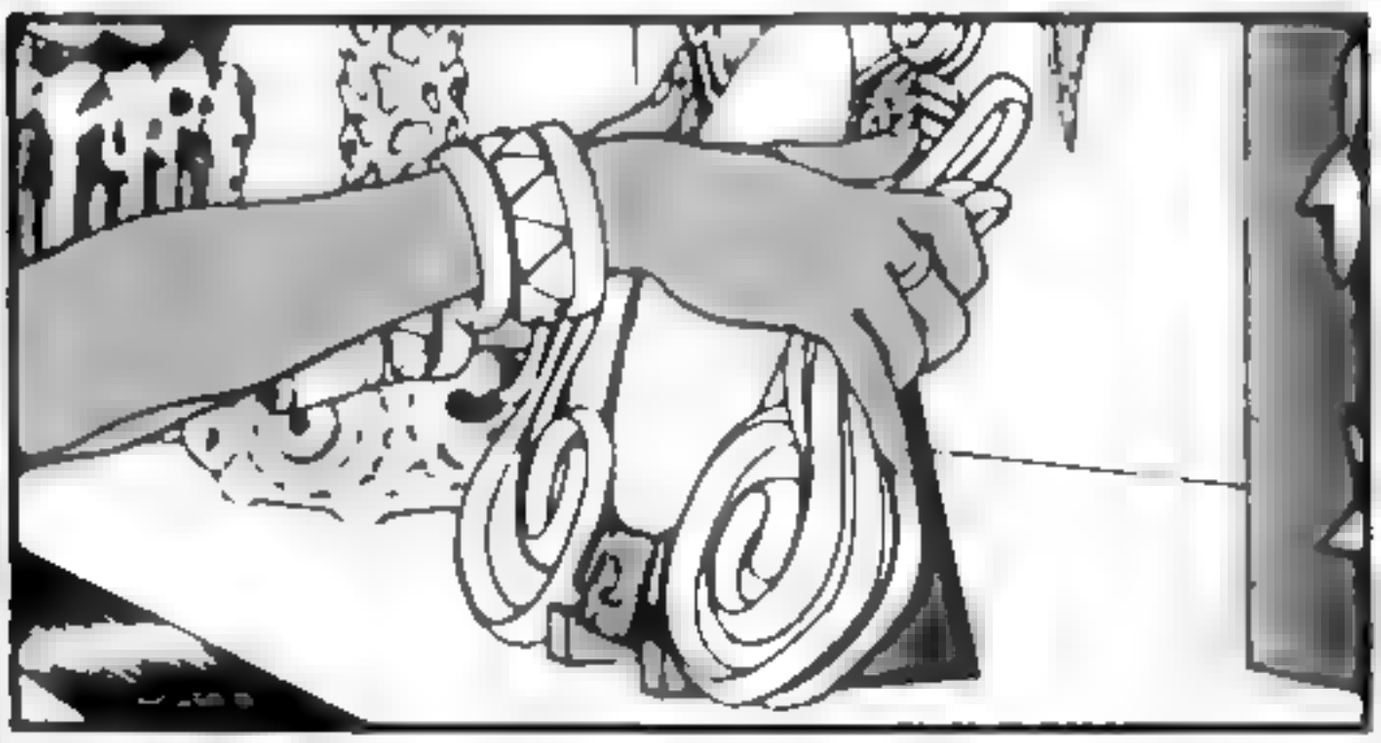

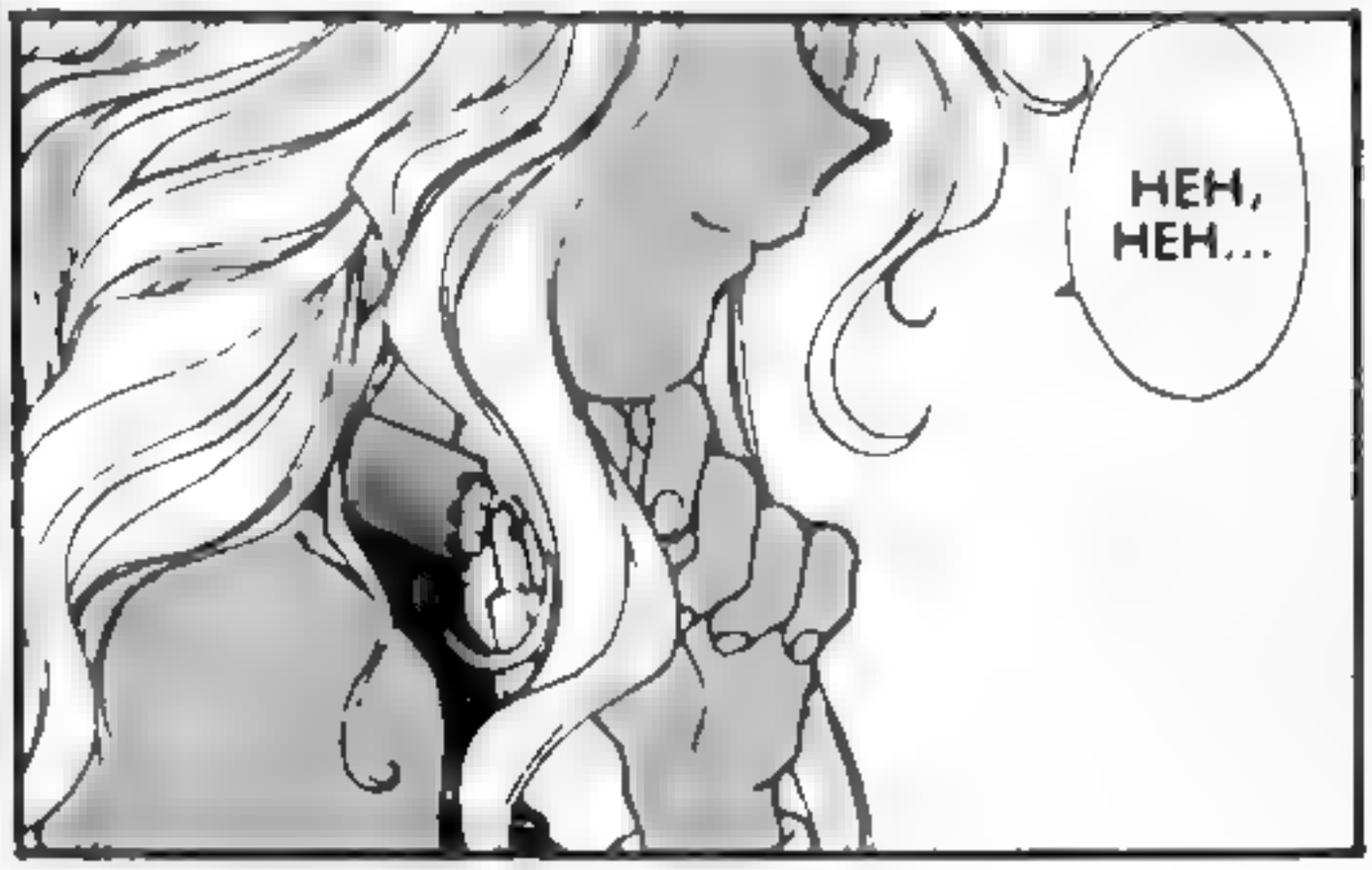
HEH, HEH...

WHAT A PITY, SKULD.

YOU WON'T GET TO WATCH ME TRAP *BELL-DANDY!*

AND WHAT'S THE POINT OF SEALING UP BELL-DANDY?

I'M NOT OUT TO TRAP GODDESSES, YOU KNOW.

I'M HERE ON EARTH TO TRACK DOWN PEOPLE WHO'VE RECEIVED BLESSINGS FROM THEM AND TO GIVE THOSE PEOPLE A CHANCE TO SIGN PACTS WITH US DEMONS INSTEAD.

MY JOB IS TO EXPAND OUR MARKET SHARE. *PERIOD.*

FRANKLY, I'D BE HAPPY IF THE GODDESSES PACKED UP AND WENT HOME.

I MEAN, IT'S *HIGHLY* UNUSUAL FOR US TO STAY HERE THIS LONG!

NAÏVE.

YOU'RE *TOTALLY* NAÏVE, MARA!

IF YOU'RE GOING TO ALL THE TROUBLE OF EXPANDING YOUR MARKET SHARE...

THEN WHY NOT JUST TAKE THE *WHOLE DAMN EARTH?!*

AAH, HOW GLORIOUS IT WILL BE!

A WORLD OF FREEDOM-- NO MORE ORDER, NO MORE LAWS...

...A TRUE *UTOPIA* FOR THE HUMAN RACE!

AND *YOU!* YOU WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS THE HARDEST WORKING LITTLE SALES REP IN THE HISTORY OF DEMONDOM!

BESIDES, THEY'RE SIMPLE SEALS. YOU CAN TAKE 'EM OFF AGAIN.

....
....

ALL RIGHT! *LET'S DO IT!!*

HMPH!

...THAT FOOL!

SIMPLE OR NOT, *I'M* THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN UNLOCK THEM.

OOH, JUST THINK! WHEN THE WHOLE WORLD HAS SIGNED PACTS WITH US DEMONS...

...THIS WHOLE PLANET WILL BE *MINE!*

ER, I MEAN OURS, OF COURSE..

OH, YEAH... AND WHEN I'M FINISHED USING HER, I CAN SEAL *MARA* UP, TOO!

HO HO HO HO!

GIRL, WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER, MAYBE I BETTER SEAL *YOU* UP, TOO.

SHE CREEPS ME OUT

NOW, *QUICKLY!* WE NEED TO MAKE MORE SEALING MIRRORS.

HO HO HO HO!

HA HA HA HA!

LEAVE IT TO ME, URD!

IT'S OKAY, BELL.

I'M SURE.

I MEAN, THERE'S NO *PROOF* MARA'S GOT THEM.

I'VE GOT THIS SORT OF "SIXTH SENSE" ABOUT CRISES.

I'M ALMOST ALWAYS RIGHT!

THANK YOU, KEIICHI.

...

GUESS THAT WON'T IMPRESS A *GODDESS*...

I... I THINK I'LL MAKE SOME TEA. WANT SOME...?

YEAH!

I... I'VE GOT TO PULL MYSELF TOGETHER...

...

YEESH... ISN'T THERE *ANYTHING* I CAN SAY...?

HI, GUYS!

EH?

...?

URD?!

URD! YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!

"ALL RIGHT"...?! AS IF!!

MARA WAS SO PISSED OFF ABOUT THE HOT-SPRING FIASCO...

...SHE DRAGGED ME OFF TO ANOTHER KARAOKE DUEL.

DUSK TO DAWN, NO LESS!

OH, URD... I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE SAFE.

I WORRIED SO MUCH...

SORRY, SIS.

:WHEWW: WELL, IF URD'S OKAY, THEN SKULD--

HEY! WHERE *IS* SKULD...?

HER ...?

SHE WAS BABBLING SOMETHING ABOUT BANPEI GOING MISSING..

...AND HOW SHE WAS GONNA SEARCH ALL OVER...

GOOD GRIEF! I ALREADY BROUGHT HIM BACK!

I'LL GO FIND HER, GIRLS!

WHAM

HEH, HEH...

GAME

KRAK

RINGG

FWHP

EEK!

SPLAT

?

OOH...

OH, DEAR... I NEED TO *THINK!* MARA TOOK ME PRISONER... THEN...?

SOMEBODY!!

HELLLP MEEE!!

?

THIS... THIS THING'S A *SEAL MIRROR!*

PLEASE LET ME OUT! I DON'T CARE! YOU ARE QUICK! LEAVE! OUT! I HAVEN'T

SOME POOR SOUL'S SHUT UP IN THERE! HOW PERFECTLY *AWFUL!*

THAT SOUNDS LIKE... AND THIS SEAL MIRROR... COULD IT BE...?

拙者—！

Mirror of Seals, Mirror of Closure, Harken to this My Voice!

I am the Mistress of the Seal!
I am the Mistress of Release!
By this my Voice I see thee Free...
Thou Prisoner of the Mirror!

SLURP

WAAH!

THAT HURT!

BE MORE CAREFUL, WHY DON'T YA?!

GACK!

URD!

D-DON'T SEAL ME UP AGAIN!

I'M SO SORRY, SKULD!

HUH ...?

WHA-? EH?

NO WAY!

YOU MEAN I GOT SEALED UP...

...BY YOUR *DEMON SIDE?!*

YES. MY VOICE WAS ABLE TO UNDO THE SEAL...

...SO IT'S NATURAL TO ASSUME MARA SUCCEEDED IN SEPARATING OUT MY GODDESS AND DEMON HALVES.

OH, TO THINK HOW MY DEAR SWEET SISTER SUFFERED BECAUSE OF *ME!*

THAT IS **TOO** WEIRD...

Sniff

Sob

WAIT A SEC!

IF YOU'RE HERE, THEN THE OTHER URD... .....

BELL-DANDY'S IN DANGER!!

HEH, HEH, HEH!

KEIICHI'S GONE, JUST AS I PLANNED

AND NOW... THE DEVIL'S WORK BEGINS IN THE SHADOWS!

URD...? I MADE SOME TEA...

!!

HA HA!

TH-THAT'S SO N-NICE.

WHEW, WHAT A SHOCK!

OKAY, THIS TIME FOR SURE...

OH, YES-- WOULD YOU LIKE SOME COOKIES, URD?

AAAH... ER... SURE! COOKIES! YEAH!

*RRG... SHE'S GOOD... **DAMN** GOOD.*

SHE'S GOT A REAL GIFT FOR THROWING ME OFF.

BELL... I'M BACK!

SO SOON?

HUH?! *ALREADY?*

I'LL GO GET IT FOR YOU.

HMM... MAYBE I CAN WORK WITH THIS...

OOPS... FORGOT TO TAKE MY HELMET!

DROVE OFF WITHOUT IT!

OH, DEAR!

HEY, KEIICHI... GOT A SEC?

WHAT FOR?

SINCE ALL I NEED IS FOR HER TO DROP HER GUARD...

OPEN YOUR MOUTH AND CLOSE YOUR EYES... AND YOU WILL GET A *BIG* SURPRISE...!

R-REALLY ...?

DON'T WORRY. I'LL JUST GIVE YOU A LITTLE SOME-THING...

...THAT'LL HELP YOU FIND SKULD.

AH, I SEE!

SURE, GREAT! GO FOR IT!

HE REALLY *IS* SO TRUSTING. BUT...

...THIS TIME IT'S YOUR UNDOING, BOY!

KEIICHI, IS THIS--

THNK

WH... WHAT AM I SEEING...?

WHAT'S HAPPENING?!

NOT A DREAM...

NOT AN ILLUSION...

I TRUST YOU...

I *BELIEVE* YOU, KEIICHI!

BUT... WHAT ABOUT URD'S FEELINGS ...?!

hahh

AND WHAT ABOUT *MY* FEELINGS ...?

hahh

NAÏVE. AND *ALL MINE.*

BOTH OF YOU!

SSHHH

OUT OF SYMPATHY FOR YOU, SISTER DEAREST...

...I'LL SEAL YOU INTO A STATE OF PEACEFUL SLEEP...

...SLEEP ETERNAL!!

HUH?

DON'T LET HER FOOL YOU BELL-DANDY!

SHE'S NOT THE REAL URD!

NEXT ISSUE:
"THE BATTLE FOR URD"